
Meeting: Delegated Decisions by the Executive Member for Community Services on Traffic Regulation Orders

Date: 16 November 2015

Subject: West Hill, Aspley Guise – Consider Objections to Proposed Waiting Restrictions

Report of: Paul Mason, Head of Highways

Summary: This report seeks the approval of the Executive Member for Community Services for the implementation of No Waiting at any time restrictions on West Hill, Aspley Guise.

Contact Officer: Nick Chapman

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: Aspley and Woburn

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

To improve highway safety, facilitate the free flow of traffic and improve the amenity of streets for residents.

Financial:

The total cost of implementing the scheme will be approximately £5,000 and it is being funded via the Rural Match Funding (RMF) scheme.

Legal:

Central Bedfordshire Council is the highway and traffic authority for the road network in Central Bedfordshire. To be legally enforceable, any proposed waiting restriction or stopping restriction must be implemented under a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).

Risk Management:

None from this report

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None from this report

Equalities/Human Rights:

None from this report

Community Safety:

The proposal is expected to increase the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicle users.

Sustainability:

None from this report.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the proposal to install no waiting at any time in West Hill, Aspley Guise be implemented as published.

Background and Information

1. Parking restrictions aimed at tackling indiscriminate parking at several locations in Aspley Guise have been identified as a priority for the Parish Council. They have taken advantage of the Council's RMF scheme to help fund the work. This report relates to proposed restrictions at West Hill.
2. The proposals were formally advertised by public notice in October 2015. Consultations were carried out with the emergency services and other statutory bodies, Aspley Guise Parish Council and the Ward Members. Residents living in the immediate area were individually consulted.
3. A total of nine of written representations were received in respect of the West Hill proposals, of which six were objections and three supported the proposals. The representations received as part of that original consultation are included in Appendix E.

As a result discussions were held with the Ward Member and the proposed double yellow lines were reduced in length and residents were re-consulted. Despite the Council's efforts to reduce the impact of the scheme, seven representations have been received, mostly, but not all, still opposed to the restrictions. The replies to the revised scheme are the focus of this report. Copies of the correspondences are included in Appendix F and the main comments received are summarised in paragraph 4. Below.

4. The main points raised by those objecting to the revised the no waiting at any time restrictions in West Hill are:-
 - a) Some homes have no off-street parking and the double yellow lines will force them to walk further to find a parking space.
 - b) The few parking spaces that remain will be taken up by vehicles associated with nearby business premises. Most of these vehicles are owned by a company that is expected to re-locate in the near future, so the Council should wait and see what happens until afterwards.

- c) The shortened length of double yellow line will mean that parking will take place very close to a vehicular access that is used by several households, thereby severely restricting visibility for emerging drivers. This will also displace parked cars closer to a bend, which will cause blind spots.
- d) Concerns about pedestrian safety on this length of West Hill.
- e) The removal of parked cars will increase vehicle speeds and traffic calming should be provided to counter that.
- f) Disappointment that the idea of residents permit parking has been rejected.
- g) The Council should implement the restrictions as originally proposed to ensure adequate visibility when entering and leaving adjacent properties.
- h) The restrictions will affect residents' quality of life, reduce house values and are discriminatory.
- i) It is essential that the restrictions are implemented to address issues around hazardous incidents, driveway obstruction and property damage.

5. Central Bedfordshire Highways' response to the points above are as follows:-

The revised waiting restriction proposal has reduced the lengths of the double yellow lines to the absolute minimum to ensure that the narrowest section of West Hill is kept clear of parked vehicles. These now cover a relatively short length of road, so any increased walking distance for residents who have to park on-road would be relatively small.

It is felt that parking on this length of road creates a road safety hazard and in that respect it is irrelevant whether the vehicles are owned by residents or others. Parked cars will inevitably be transferred to adjacent lengths of road, but on balance it is felt that the published restrictions are needed. The maximum number of parked vehicles that could park on this length of road would be approximately ten cars, which could migrate to adjacent lengths of road.

It is accepted that the removal of parked cars can lead to an increase in traffic speeds, particularly if the yellow lines cover a relatively long length of road. In this case the yellow lines cover a length of approximately 80 metres where there is a natural narrowing of the road, mainly due to adjacent buildings. When balancing this potential marginal increase in speed against the benefits of removing the parked cars it is felt that the case for introducing restrictions is sound.

The removal of parked cars is expected to have a positive effect on pedestrian safety by improving visibility for those wishing to cross. The yellow lines would also mean that pedestrians would not be crossing between parked cars, so approaching drivers would be able to see them more clearly.

Residents permit schemes can be helpful in areas where non-residents, such as railway commuters, regularly park in roads where most homes have no off-road parking thereby denying spaces for residents. It is accepted that vehicles associated with nearby businesses take up some of the parking spaces in West Hill. However, a residents permit scheme would not help at this location because parking bays could not be provided on this particular length of road due to its width. Double yellow lines would still be needed on this narrow section. Unrestricted parking remains on adjacent lengths of road, particularly overnight and at weekends when demand for parking is highest. Restricting those adjacent lengths of road to permit holder parking only would mean significantly widening the scope of any parking scheme, involving more residents and businesses.

The Council has the right to introduce restrictions when it considers those necessary in the interests of road safety and/or traffic management. Consideration has been given to the impact of the restrictions on nearby residents and an attempt has been made to reach a compromise.

Conclusion

6. It is felt that the waiting restrictions are justified on road safety grounds and have been reduced to the minimum length to achieve that objective..
7. If the approved the works are expected to take place within the current financial year.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Location Plan

Appendix B – Drawing of ORIGINAL Proposal

Appendix C – Drawing of REVISED Proposal

Appendix D – Public Notices of Proposals

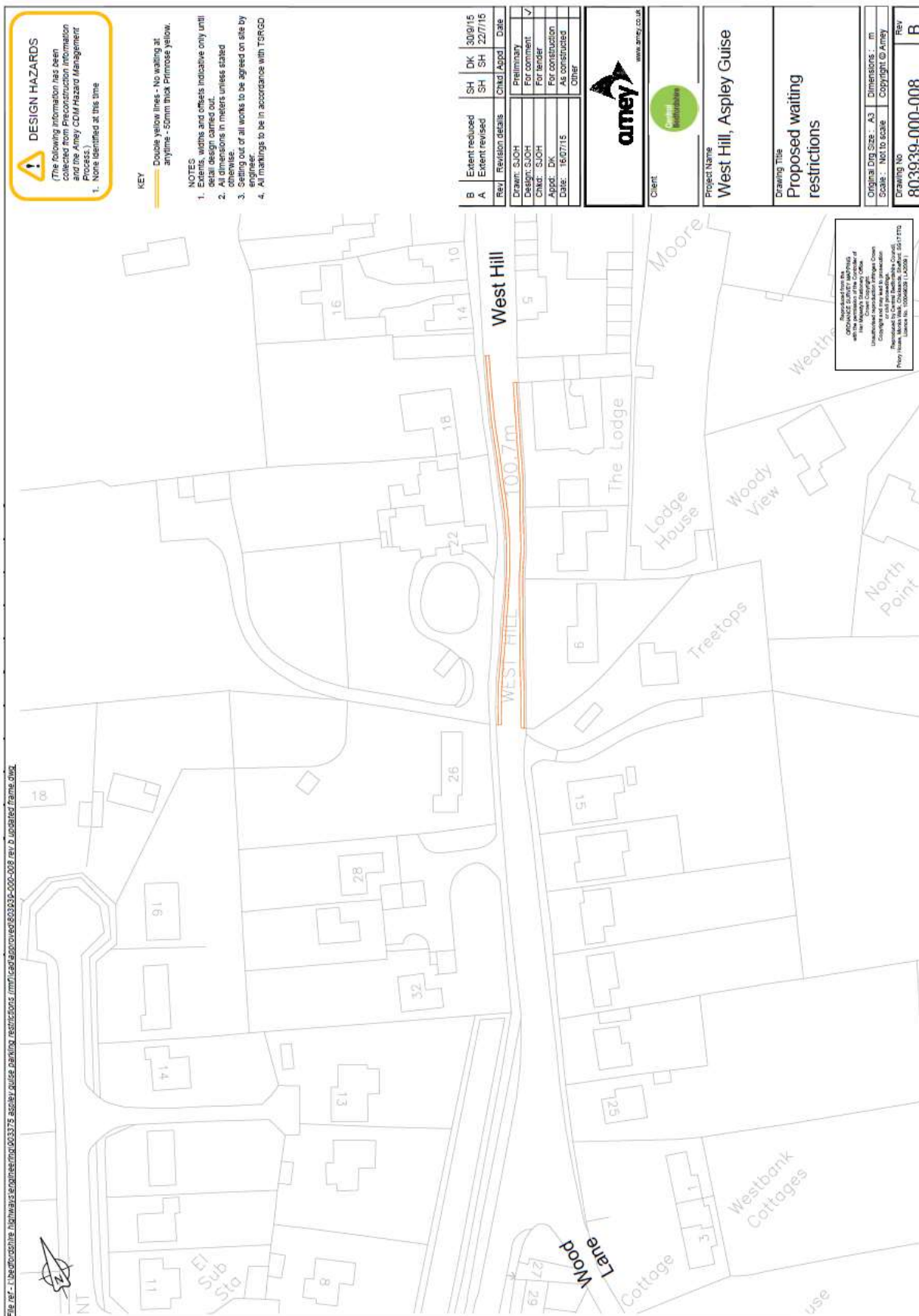
Appendix E – Objections and Representations to ORIGINAL Proposal

Appendix F – Objections and Representations to REVISED Proposal

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PUBLIC NOTICE



**CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PROPOSES TO INTRODUCE NO WAITING AT ANY TIME
IN THE SQUARE/BEDFORD ROAD, CHURCH STREET AND WEST HILL, ASPLEY GUISE**

Reason for proposal: The proposed Order is considered necessary for avoiding danger to persons or traffic and for facilitating the passage of traffic on the road. The restrictions are intended to address indiscriminate parking at locations where parking should not take place due to the width and/or alignment of the road.

Effect of the Order:

To introduce No Waiting at any time on the following lengths of road in Aspley Guise:-

1. The Square/Bedford Road, south side, from a point approximately 3 metres south-east of the boundary of nos.2 and 3 The Square extending in a generally easterly direction for approximately 36 metres.
2. Church Street, east side, from a point approximately 9 metres south of the centre of its junction with Church Hill extending in a generally southerly direction for approximately 100 metres.
3. West Hill, both sides, from a point in line with the south flank wall of no.10 West Hill extending in a south-westerly direction to a point approximately 1 metre north of the north flank wall of no.15 West Hill.

Further Details may be examined during normal office hours at the address shown below, viewed online at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/publicstatutorynotices or tel. 0845 3656116.

Comments should be sent in writing to the Transportation Manager, Central Bedfordshire Highways, Woodlands Annexe, Manton Lane, Bedford MK41 7NU or e-mail centralbedsconsultation@amey.co.uk by 28 August 2015. Any objections must state the grounds on which they are made.

Order Title: If made will be "Central Bedfordshire Council (Bedfordshire County Council (District of Mid Bedfordshire) (Civil Enforcement Area and Special Enforcement Area) (Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places) (Consolidation) Order 2008) (Variation No.*) Order 201**"

Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Chicksands
Shefford SG17 5TQ

Marcel Coiffait
Director of Community Services

30 July 2015

Appendix E – Objections and Representations to ORIGINAL Proposal

As a young family living in Xxxxx Xxxxx West Hill the proposed no waiting will have a direct affect on our parking situation.

The proposed changes to parking is directly opposite our home and having a young child under 2 and another on the way, not having the ability to park near our home will cause obviously problems.

The day to day movement of our children, in and out of the car, with buggies and prams will be affected.

The parking is already at a premium due to the businesses in 5 West Hill Courtyard having large numbers of cars present. They have the joy of allocated parking in the courtyard so could there not be a residents parking permit introduced to reduce the number of cars parked on the main road.

I look forward to your response.

Further to the consultation letter we received dated 29th July and therein directed please find hereafter the list of principle objections to your proposed scheme to introduce a no wait at anytime on West Hill, Aspley guise.

The reason for your proposal as stated is avoiding danger to persons or traffic and facilitating the passage of traffic on West Hill, it also states as a reason to address indiscriminate parking at locations where parking should not take place due to the width of the road.

As resident of west hill for over 10 years and with a young family, we believe there is a substantial discrepancy between the reasons you invoked to justify the proposed change and the reality of the road, in particular we fear your suggested scheme is the result of trying something for a low budget, rather then addressing the real issue.

Further, and as better detailed hereafter, we believe this is but false saving as implementing the scheme as proposed will inevitably increase the Council exposure to legal claims from victims of crossings and other speed, ancillary facilitated by the proposed scheme.

The basis of our objections are, for the most, listed below. At the end we propose a simple and cost effective alternative.

Objection 1

The proposed scheme if implemented, would turn West Hill into a speeding hazard. Its danger would further be accentuated if we consider the newly created crossings. We have been residents for 10 years and have seen how fast cars speed through when there is no cars parked forcing unruly drivers to slow down. This makes the newly created crossings seem pointless and unsafe, therefore the money the council has spent to do the crossings neither of which is finished would have been wasted and if anything would increase council liability for creating the premise for cars to speed unencumbered when driving by the unmarked crossing, particularly at rush hour when the school buses stop outside Moore place.

Objection 2

Taking away parking spots for residents/visitors when already it's difficult enough to park as the business centre opposite our house already takes most of the spots. Currently on a busy day between 6 west hill (where the crossing is) and Beale House (no 22) there are inbetween 10 and 12 cars parked. By putting double yellow lines that traffic will have to park in the 5 remaining spots left outside our house (no .xx) meaning you are removing our Parking from us. The business centre will take these spots especially Kings who sometimes have 5 vans parked on west hill. Thus, we, the residents would have to park somewhere in the village (not clear where in fact you propose for us to park?) and risk to be run over as we would probably use the dangerous crossing. Not sure that was the intended purpose of your schemes! Plus there is the added risk of having the resident's cars all parked in the same area away from properties, if that is in fact what you propose, which is not clear in the way you submitted your proposed scheme. Are you therefore suggesting that the Council has additional spare budget to increase police patrolling to guarantee our vehicles security? Again, in your proposal you failed to address the basic needs of the residents affected.

Aspley Guise is, and has always been, a residents village, with most of the properties affected being listed and as such with no parking and no option for even building one. We are a household with a child and have no parking as it stands on many occasions outside our house creating discomfort because of the business centre opposite.

We would recommend for 'residents with permit only parking' from the newly created crossing at No. 6 West Hill through to 'The Steamer' (No. 18) this is also the widest part of the road and this will also calm the traffic down as the oncoming traffic must pay attention. Then the double yellow lines go to No. 24 thus covering the narrowest part of the (pot holed) road.

The cost of implementing the 'residents with permit only parking' is minimal and residents would, we believe, be happy to contribute nominally for this right, further reducing the financial burden for this council, creating a safer road and, well, happier residents.

Please acknowledge receipt of this email and its content

I would like to object to the proposal to introduce no waiting for the following reasons;

1) There is no need;

The proposal is not necessary after 5pm and at weekends where very few cars are parked in West Hill. The issue is only during the daytime, and has only become an issue recently since a company moved into the offices on West Hill. They park their landscape gardening fleet of transit vans and other wider vehicles on West Hill. If that Company parked their vehicles in their allocated parking spaces there would not be an issue. The fault lies with granting them a licence to run a business when they do not have enough parking spaces. Businesses come and go yet the residents will be stuck with this when it is completely unnecessary.

2) Safety;

The parked cars provide a natural slower road environment and by taking that away, cars and lorries (of which there are a lot using the road as a rat run from the motorway), can speed down the hill. Many schoolchildren use the pavement to walk to the lower and middle schools and to catch the school buses from the square. They all cross the road from Wood Lane and the area beyond on the southern side of West Hill.

They cross because the pavement is only on the northern side. If cars and lorries are speeding, the risk to schoolchildren is vastly increased.

The risk is also increased because the parking will begin further up West Hill near Wood lane. It will basically just move up the hill. The children and elderly pedestrians will have to cross between parked cars and will not be as easily seen by speeding traffic. It is an accident waiting to happen.

- 3) Discrimination;
Many residents do not have off road parking or driveways. They are disadvantaged from this scheme. They cannot offload shopping ,get deliveries or access the house easily with small children and babies. Maintenance work on the properties cannot be carried out .Residents who bought their houses with parking will be disadvantaged practically and financially as the value of their properties will plummet .
- 4) Age discrimination;
No old or sick person could live in these houses as they cannot get access to a vehicle or walk the long distance to a possible parking space .This could be 1000 yards up West Hill or further depending on what is available.No wheelchair user could make that climb as the gradient is severe.
- 5) Impact on conservation area;
The parking problem will just move up the hill and the transit vans will park on the grass verges destroying the look of the village and the environment. They will churn up the grass verges over the winter and the place will look a mess. The Council will end up extending the scheme as the problem just moves elsewhere ,causing even more consternation to residents.
- 6) Policing ;
Just because there is no waiting, it does not mean that people, especially van drivers, will not disobey the instruction. The Policing of the area is virtually impossible unless you intend to give the area its own traffic warden or have a permanent police presence.
- 7) Cost;
This is completely waste of financial resources for the reasons mentioned above and will need extra cost to police it. Values of properties will also fall leading to requests for a reduction in Council Tax charges.
- 8) Size discrimination
I am a small person and weigh 7 stone. I would not be able to carry shopping or goods into my house from such large distances. You would discriminate me carrying out the normal duties of a mother of 3.

I wholeheartedly object to this proposal for all the reasons above and am prepared to fight it legally if necessary as it is highly dangerous, and age and size discriminatory.
I believe it may break UK and European Law on discrimination.

ASPLEY GUISE- Proposed No Waiting at any time.

Thank you for your letter providing us with this information re, this is a proposal we wholly support.

However, we are concerned that the **No Waiting** restriction would be safer and more effective if it were extended on the North East side of West Hill to a point opposite the entry to Wood Lane.

The concern is, that once the proposed parking restrictions are in place, some (if not all) of the cars currently parking in the bottle neck area, will move and park on the North side of West Hill between the new **No Waiting** restriction and just before the corner opposite Wood Lane. Our experience in the past is a worry, since a number of near misses have already occurred there, when vehicles driving down West Hill have not noticed the parked vehicle round the bend and have needed to brake sharply to avoid oncoming vehicles. Currently, this does not happen very often since few vehicles park there, but one must assume this will change when the new restrictions are in place.

Would you kindly consider this point? I am sure you accede it would be far more cost effective to extend the limit now, providing you agree a valid point has been made, than to have to revise it at a later time.

Your kind attention in this matter will be appreciated,

PROPOSAL TO INTRODUCE NO WAITING AT ANY TIME IN THE SQUARE/BEDFORD ROAD, CHURCH STREET AND WEST HILL, ASPLEY GUISE

Reference: GPB/60172/903375/3.12

Response of Robert Brown and Nicola Bethell, residents of [redacted] West Hill, Aspley Guise, MK17 8DN to the above proposal, outlined in Mr Chapman's letter of 29 July 2015

1 Background

We live with our 3 (three) year old son at 14 West Hill, Aspley Guise.

Nicola Bethell has owned [redacted] West Hill since 9 December 2005, and throughout the time since then has parked, other parked traffic allowing, safely and without incident of any description, directly against the pavement, that is, neatly on the highway directly outside the front door of [redacted] West Hill.

This has afforded safe access to and exit from [redacted] West Hill, for example when unloading shopping, and more recently, and particularly, when loading and unloading our 3 (three) year old son, throughout his infancy and now as a little boy, on daily weekday trips to his child-minder, and on trips to and from his grandparents or other ad-hoc journeys.

[redacted] West Hill was built in the late 19th century, and has since that time enjoyed, together with its successive owners, unfettered, safe, and uninterrupted access to its front door from the highway.

That uninterrupted access has been enjoyed since before the advent of motor cars, throughout the last century, including during the time when Sefton Delmer (billeted at Larchfield, West Hill for a time, prior to installation at the Rookery) and his team carried out so much valuable work in Aspley Guise towards the allied effort during the Second World War.

The frontal access to ☐ West Hill from a vehicle parked on the highway is an integral part of the utility and proper enjoyment of the property and has been customarily so for the greater part of 100 (one hundred) years without any incident, of any kind, whatsoever.

☐ West Hill is situated between several listed properties more fully described in the Mid Beds District Council Planning Division Appraisal publication "Aspley Guise Conservation Area" of 19 March 2008. 14 West Hill sits firmly within the Aspley Guise Conservation Area.

That same Mid Beds District Council appraisal of 19 March 2008 states that there are "opportunities for enhancement" of the conservation area and the village. It goes on, "Bedford Road and West Hill are extremely busy routes through the village. ...This route (is) both dangerous and noisy and detrimental to the otherwise rural character of the village".

The clear message within the council's own published appraisal is that the conservation area is better maintained and protected by **reducing** traffic volume, speed and noise, and danger. The proposal before us will do none of these things. In fact it will do exactly the opposite, and place residents and pedestrians at greater risk, and it will place the council and its officers at greater exposure to the law, from claims by those to whom it owes, in statute and in tort, a duty of care.

The council's own Planning Division published appraisal document of March 2008 further goes on, that there should be a "consistent, sympathetic, sensitive, and detailed development control over (inter alia) highway works..."

The proposal set before us, does nothing to address neither the danger, nor the noise previously identified by the now renamed predecessor Mid Beds Council, nor does it address safety, nor does it address the reasonable parking needs of the residents of Aspley Guise.

It does not present evidence, as Mid Beds council stated in 2008 that it should, of "a consistent, sympathetic sensitive, and detailed development control over (inter alia) highway works..."

This proposal merely seeks to create, in terms, some kind of perverted vision of a dangerous and reckless "urban clearway", through a rural and otherwise quiet conservation area, where and in which young families, live and play.

It will lead to faster traffic, and higher volumes of faster, noisier and more dangerous traffic.

This proposal shows a total disregard for the character of the village, and a fundamental failure to understand and prioritise the issues affecting the safety and wellbeing of tax-paying and law-abiding residents of the village.

Further, it is in direct and unequivocal contravention of the published and stated aims of the council, set out in detail only 7 years ago.

2 Safety – Use of West Hill as a short cut

West Hill and Bedford Road are used frequently at peak morning and early evening times as a high speed cut-through by traffic. More often than not this traffic is travelling at **speeds far in excess of the 30mph speed limit.**

Drivers often show blatant disregard for the people that live in this otherwise quiet village.

This peak time traffic density has most likely been exacerbated recently by the long running roundabout works at Wavendon / A421.

The parking that takes place on West Hill and Bedford Road actually acts as the only impediment to the flow of this dense, unwarranted and speeding traffic, and indeed, parked cars provide the only useful, let alone practical, protection for pedestrians from the traffic that consistently speeds through the village on roads and on alignments that were not designed to handle said traffic volumes nor speeds.

Without the parked cars, Aspley Guise would be an "urban clearway", and lives of residents, and pedestrians would be put at risk. The life of our young child, the lives of the young children of my neighbours, and the lives of my other neighbours' young grandchildren would be put needlessly and recklessly, and negligently at risk, by a cleared, double yellow-lined road full of speeding traffic. They would be at risk as they played on their scooters on the pavement, skipped, played hopscotch, walked to school, or played generally as children have a proper entitlement to, in a civilised and balanced society, not least in a quiet, rural village.

Your proposal talks of "avoiding danger to persons or traffic, and for facilitating the passage of traffic on the road."

- **It completely ignores pedestrian safety.**
- **It completely ignores sensible traffic calming that could be employed, one slowing traffic down West Hill, one slowing traffic on Bedford Road coming into the village.**
- **It completely ignores any attempt to divert traffic to the new and far more appropriate by-pass from the Ridgmont Roundabout via Woburn, and hence north or south to the A5, or, to the improved A421 into south and central Milton Keynes**
- **It completely ignores the reasonable and effective option, as practiced successfully in less dangerous settings of Ampthill, Toddington and many London Boroughs, of implementing a 20mph speed limit. This might sensibly run from the War Memorial to the mini roundabout at Woburn Sands, protecting, as it would, those children attending Larchfield Nursery, walking to the village lower school and those children crossing to catch and discharge from buses to and from other schools in Bedford and Ampthill.**

Please let us know, in writing when, and by what means, and let us have sight of all minutes of meetings where, these sensible options were discussed, and we can only presume, discounted, in favour of turning Aspley Guise into an uninhabitable, dangerous, and noisy "urban clearway".

Please let us have in writing, evidence of how the interests of all stakeholders were weighed and taken into account, together with the documentary evidence and research supporting your conclusion to "double yellow line" the village.

After taking advice, it is our confirmed view that a court would not see the proposal put before us, if implemented, as a sensible option, nor would it satisfy the fundamental test of a duty of care in law.

You should know that a child was recently knocked down in West Hill, and increasing both the speed (implicitly via your proposal) and flow (explicitly as set out in the stated aims of your

proposal) of traffic, will only raise the risk of this repeating. We would urge the council and its officers to consider their respective and personal liability position, having been put on notice.

3 Safety- Use of West Hill and Bedford Road as a night- time race track

On weekend evenings and some week nights the main route through Aspley Guise is used as some kind of race track for traffic in both directions. Sometimes this is cars, sometimes groups of motor bikes. At these times there is less parking on the street, certainly there are typically less, if any, parked cars in front of 18 and 22 West Hill. This is a foretaste of what day times will become, if the proposal is adopted.

Travelling from the Husborne Crawley direction, the 'chicane' at the Blue Orchid is taken, and then cars accelerate at dangerously high speed past Moore Place, and thrash up West Hill.

The proposed scheme will only increase the attraction of the village to these reckless and criminal individuals.

It will endanger the lives of visitors to the Blue Orchid, and increase risk of accidents to other road users.

Please let us have sight of evidence of consideration, and weighing of these risks in framing your proposal.

4 Safety-Impact of offices at rear of 5 West Hill

The cars and vans of employees of businesses in the offices at the rear of 5 West Hill, spill over onto West Hill. There is inadequate private parking in the courtyard at the rear of 5 West Hill. These cars and vans park up West Hill outside 18, 20 and 22 West Hill, and often include vans, which obscure vision of the highway towards Moore Place. Frequently the vans belong Kings Landscape. They also park in areas otherwise used, and historically appropriate to houses facing onto West Hill, in front of numbers 14 and 10 and the cottages beyond, towards the square.

A residents parking scheme by permit, in marked delineated bays would be a practical solution, combined with double yellow lines from 18 to 22 West Hill, where the road is especially narrow. Please provide evidence of its discussion and presumed dismissal as a solution.

This would have the support of many neighbours, all of whom, when questioned, would be prepared to contribute a nominal sum to a permit scheme.

Further, the exit from the courtyard at 5 West Hill is completely blind, and very dangerous. The mirror that is on the wall opposite is broken and totally inadequate. Traffic must be slowed here, not speeded up.

5 Safety – degradation and debris from 5 West Hill, previously identified to parish council 2.5 years ago

5 West Hill is an unoccupied building facing directly onto West Hill. Its lower courses of render are breaking off and shedding dangerous debris into the road. This is a serious risk to traffic and

improvement measures should be enforced. The council have been informed, and nothing has changed. The situation has worsened and is now a danger.

6 Safety - width of road

The road width outside the full length of 14 West Hill is in fact wider by 2 metres than the road width on the right hand curve up West Hill opposite The Mount. In this latter location, there is no double yellow line, and, correctly in our view, no need for one, and absent from the proposal. By the same logic therefore, there is absolutely no need for a double yellow line outside 14 West Hill. The perfectly safe and uninterrupted passage of two cars, past 14 West Hill, when cars are parked outside 14 West Hill is routine and usual. It would be safer still if 20mph was the legal speed limited as in central Ampthill. This comfortable and safe three car width piece of road outside 14 West Hill is deemed under the proposal, to require double yellow lines. That is frankly ridiculous. However the council considers the stretch of right hand curve up West Hill opposite The Mount, which can only accommodate two vehicles width, not to require double yellow lines. This position is illogical, and preposterous.

Please provide evidence of the council's established and applied written policy on what constitutes a safe width of highway before a double yellow line is required. Please provide evidence of accidents outside 14 West Hill attributable to the presence of a parked car outside 14 West Hill.

7 Safety – indiscriminate parking

Save for the parking outside 18, 20 and 22 West Hill, neither we nor our neighbours have seen evidence of indiscriminate parking in West Hill. Residents park outside their houses as they always have done for many decades. That is not indiscriminate. Your proposal seeks only and exclusively to address the symptom and completely ignores the cause.

8 Reasonable Parking capacity for tax paying law abiding residents – the new “crossing” outside Moore Place

The recent addition of some kind of crude road narrowing “crossing” to one side of Moore Place has removed two, perfectly safe parking spaces.

The “crossing” remains unfinished, and unsafe. The kerb is not highlighted and provides an unannounced danger to traffic in both directions. It is well meant, but unsafe.

A solid white line has been incorrectly extended by the contractors across a kerb which has not been legally dropped. This has denied a further safe parking space.

The implied “crossing”, as it is, will be a “death trap”, if traffic is ‘eased’ by installing yellow lines – in reality this means faster and greater volumes of dangerous traffic.

9 Reasonable Parking capacity for tax paying law abiding residents- where do you suggest they park under the proposal?

Please explain where, under your proposal, you suggest that the tax paying and law-abiding residents of the conservation area within the quiet village of Aspley Guise should park their cars. We

estimate that there are perhaps 15 cars of residents that will be affected. What provision is made in your proposal to provide reasonable space for the cars to be parked, bearing in mind that these are the cars and same spaces used for safe parking over many decades. Will they have to compete with the offices at 5 West Hill, and the guests of Moore Place who frequently overspill, in both cases beyond their own dedicated, and private car parks?

Please provide evidence of the contingency and your discussions and suggestions to deal with genuine, long customary, and reasonable resident parking requirements if your proposal is implemented.

The proposal does nothing more, in metaphorical terms, than to "kick the can down the road", except that in literal terms the can is actually the body of residents of this village, and no alternative is offered by you.

10 In Conclusion

The proposal as presented is totally unsupported by any evidence, it is untenable in all aspects, and it absolutely contradicts the council's previously stated and explicit aims for the Aspley Guise conservation area. It is demonstrably and recklessly unsafe, and presents an outright danger to residents, and particularly the elderly and the young children of Aspley Guise.

It is ill conceived, and does not address the causes of traffic congestion, nor the excess speed of traffic, nor the noise, nor pollution, nor the danger that all of those combined present. On the contrary it actively promotes each and every one of those negative contributing factors.

11 We suggest an alternative, considered, safe, and comprehensive proposal

- A -Resident permit parking scheme, with marked hatched-off car –length bays (nominal annual cost) beginning and including outside 14 West Hill, North East to cover 10 West Hill, and Lime Cottage, to the old chapel in the Square, for those residents who have no or little practical off street parking possibility .
- B -Rectification of the misapplied solid white line outside the old newsagents /post office.
- C- Double yellow lines in front of 20 and 22 West Hill.
- D -20 mph speed limit from the war memorial on Bedford Road to the end of West Hill at the mini roundabout in Woburn Sands, as successfully employed in Toddington and Ampthill.
- E -Speed bumps as employed so successfully in Weathercock Lane, Aspley Guise/Woburn Sands - at similar interval and dimension
- F -Traffic calming in Bedford Road, priority out of the village.
- G -Traffic calming in West Hill outside 22 West Hill, priority to those travelling up West Hill towards Woburn Sands .
- H- Restricted access, residents access only signage, at Husborne Crawley and Woburn Sands, and periodic census enforcement

We look forward to acknowledgement of our response and our various and detailed objections to the proposal, and also your response, explanations and documentary evidence as reasonably requested, in early course.

Further to the consultation letter we received dated 29th July and therein directed please find hereafter the list of principle objections to your proposed scheme to introduce a no wait at anytime on West Hill, Aspley guise.

The reason for your proposal as stated is avoiding danger to persons or traffic and facilitating the passage of traffic on West Hill, it also states as a reason to address indiscriminate parking at locations where parking should not take place due to the width of the road.

As resident of 8 West Hill for almost 10 years, we wholeheartedly believe your proposal will cause other considerable issues to the residents on West hill, include me and my family.

Further, and as better detailed hereafter, we believe this is but a false saving as implementing the scheme as proposed will inevitably increase the Council exposure to legal claims from victims of crossings and other speed, ancillary facilitated by the proposed scheme.

Objection

The cars parked along west hill during the day are primarily used by the offices adjacent to 8,10,12 West Hill. This does cause an issue for the residents in that we often cannot park even within 50 meters of our houses. With babies and shopping this is a nightmare. We already have limited or no places to park during the day because of the offices adjacent to 8/10/12 West Hill. Your proposed scheme would make living in West Hill substantially worse.

Having said that, cars parking along West Hill most definitely slow down the traffic reducing the alleged danger to persons issue.

To solve the resident issue of not being able to park and to avoid danger to persons or traffic, I would strongly recommend a parking permit scheme which I for one would be happy to contribute to.

Combine a parking permit scheme with a very small segment of yellow line only at the most narrow part of West Hill and I believe you would solve the the alleged danger to persons issue and a wider issue of poor resident parking availability at a lower cost to the council/tax payer.

I would just like to add my support in favour of the waiting restrictions in West Hill (drawing No. 803939-000-008).

As the highways deemed this the narrowest part of West Hill as indicated by the road sign, I would like to advise you of the safety aspect and abuse from passing traffic our family face every day and have done for the past 10 plus years as the volume of traffic has increased.

We live almost opposite this road sign at number x West Hill the narrowest part of the road and on a daily basis we are shouted at, sworn at, property is damaged and we face a real risk of being injured and our cars damaged every time we venture both onto and off the carriageway due to cars parked along West Hill . It is near impossible at certain times of the day to leave or return home such as school bus times or refuse collection days with the flow of traffic stopped both ways, the emergency services would not get through at these times due to this parking.

I think you will see a few of our photos clearly demonstrate that this claim is supported and I invite anyway objecting to this proposal to view all our photos and copious amounts of video and CCTV footage to see both the difficulty and danger we face leaving either way from the driveway daily.

As a resident of Aspley Guise with a driveway I think I have a right to exit onto to the carriageway, sadly I am frequently unable to do this. Residents who have purchased homes on West Hill without off road parking do not have a right to park outside someone else's house blocking their driveway and causing danger to other road users who are unable to pass safely, this is also true of visitors to the village parking dangerously.

I look forward to sense prevailing and the proposals put in place as soon as possible to stop this indiscriminate parking as we all know is the narrowest part of West Hill.

Thank you for the notification of the future proposed work in our village, Aspley Guise.

We live at on West Hill and the traffic situation outside our home, has become horrific. After such a long time of protesting and raising the problems incurred every day of entering and leaving our own property it has been encouraging to see that FINALLY this is being addressed. There have in fact been a few occasions when I simply could not drive out of our property for a couple of hours, until a car had moved from its parked spot!

Not only has the parking caused us and our neighbours daily problems, it has increased the speed of which some drivers go along the road. It is fair to say that this is now known as the 'Aspley Guise Rat Run'.

We therefore have no concerns about your proposals for West Hill, Church Street or along The Square and Bedford Road, and welcome this work to finally take place.

The only worry is indeed when this work will begin as this really has become a matter of extreme urgency.

We give TOTAL endorsement to all the comments made in the enclosed letter, already in your receipt, from our neighbour at No West Hill.

Your intended plans would most certainly turn West Hill, from Moore Place Hotel to N°26, into a race track.

We feel the options as set out in Paragraph 11 to be by far the preferable option, as well as cost effective to the Council.

Appendix F - Objections and Representations to REVISED Proposal

I am writing in response to your letter dated 22 October 2015 - Proposed No Waiting at any time - West Hill, Aspley Guise.

I am saddened that you have rejected the idea of Resident Permit parking as even with the introduction of shorter yellow lines this will not stop the majority of spaces being taken by the businesses in the courtyard 5 West Hill therefore leaving the residents with little no parking spaces. They currently have spaces in the courtyard that are only allowed to be used by the businesses so please explain what you are doing to protect the residents right to park?

As my residence Xxxx Xxxxx West Hill is the only property on the East side of West Hill with no parking available what are your suggestions to allow us a reasonable distance to park close to our house with a young family of 2 when we already have to cross West Hill to reach our home?

This also leads me onto my main concern and that is the safety of crossing the road to my home Xxxx Xxxxx. There have been many recent traffic monitoring surveys conducted on the road to monitor the speed of vehicles travelling down West Hill as speeding vehicles is a major concern. The cars that currently park on your proposed no parking zone are realistically thin thing that acts as speed calming measure and I would like to know what you are proposing to install the ensure the safety of my family crossing the road to Xxxxx Xxxxx?

I look forward to your response.

Thank you for the email and for keeping us updated.

I cannot stress enough the impact the current situation has on our quality of live and the risks of manoeuvring a car through these parked vehicles when trying to leave our drive. The proposed work will improve the situation for a few but will actually make it worse and our immediate neighbours as the parked vehicles will relocate to outside our home and across our drive.

Please, please, please extend the double yellow lines to the far boundary of my home so that the risks I face daily are eliminated.

Thank you for the letter of 22 October together with the revised plan of double yellow lines.

To say that the new revised plan fills us with horror is an understatement.

The original plan had the double yellow lines going along our property which would help us a little with getting in and out of our property. This we could cope with and agreed to in our previous letter to you. At the moment any parked car either side of our property makes the normal leaving and entering of our drive a frightening experience. There is no clear view to the right of our property going up West Hill and there is NO clear view to the left going to the Square. It is only by carefully inching out and hoping that you do not have an idiot speeding that you can turn safely.

This revised plan actually makes the whole situation much worse for us. It does not even give us a clear view at all of traffic coming down West Hill, towards the Square. To have parked cars outside our property will create more anxiety, stress and dread in leaving our own property. It will permanently block any view when exiting our drive to the right. At certain times of the day I do not even attempt to leave the house because of the traffic situation.

I would urge one of your consultants to try leaving our property with a parked car on the right of our drive (as well as one on the left) and realise that there is no way you can see clearly traffic coming down West Hill. Please remember as well that many drivers do not adhere to the speed

limit as there is an apparent need to rush pass any parked cars on the left, to get to the square before meeting on coming traffic. If the double yellow lines were to stop and therefore allow cars to park outside the drive, the leaving of our property would become even more difficult and at times, dangerous. We simply will not be able to see!

When we bought this property several years ago the traffic was not an issue. It has become a daily battle and a daily dread of leaving and entering your own property. WE have constantly supported any opportunity of improving this traffic situation and now after seeing the revised plan we will become worse off than before. How is this fare?

We do not understand why these double yellow lines have been shortened and do not accept that this helps this dreadful situation. If anything these double yellow lines should go further up West Hill and allow a clearer view of on coming traffic. At least by going past our property in the original plan, the double yellow lines will allow us some view of traffic coming down West Hill.

We therefore strongly object to this new revised plan.

We write further to your letter dated 22nd October 2015

We are quite frankly astonished by your statements therein contained and your perception that your new proposed plan is nowhere near addressing all the objections already formulated in our previous letter to you in response to your letter of 29th July 2015. Please consider our previous letter to you entirely reproduced as part of this letter.

Not only your new proposal totally disregards common sense but it further disregards your legal obligations, and favours a few whilst increasing insecurity and accident risks, thus we understand that Central Beds and you Mr Nick Chapman are happy to incur such liabilities. Please be advised that with several of our neighbours we are seeking further legal advice to establish the extent of your liabilities.

With regard to your reasoning to rejecting the request for residents parking zone in front of the properties starting from No.14 to No.6 West Hill, we note that your explanation is totally flawed and does not even match the reality of the current parking space as marked on the road. In fact as an inspection would have shown, this is already assigned as parking space to all not just residents thus totally contradicting your statement " that this would not be appropriate on this particular length of road due to its width and the need to prohibit parking on the narrowest part of west hill". So there is appropriate length and width and has been so for some time. We therefore fail to see any foundation to your statement.

Furthermore, you state that resident parking is helpful in "areas where non residents....regularly park in roads where most homes have no off road parking". Again, you failed to meet the simplest of tests. Opposite our property there is a business centre composed of many businesses, to include landscaping gardeners with their vans and other vehicles, a nail salon, and many other businesses. That precisely matches the scenario required for resident parking to be granted as non residents regularly park in roads where most homes have no off road parking. If anything this makes of the proposal of a resident's parking even more appropriate, based on your own words.

For all of the above completed with our previous objections, please note our further objections as presented. We reserve all our rights direct or consequential to your decision to go ahead with your proposed plan.

In any event we recommend you to come and see the situation for yourself please if you do so knock on our door at no.xx and we will be more than pleased to evidence all the points as stated in our correspondence to you.

Your letter dated 22nd October 2015 refers to proposed changes to the initial waiting restriction proposal on West Hill.

Our main concern is that the shorter length of the yellow lines now stops immediately after the entrance to the lane which gives access to 3 properties - 20, 22 and 26 West Hill. In the previous proposal the lines continued further up the hill as far as the entrance to Nos 28-32 West Hill.

Our comments are as follows:

- The vehicles that presently use West Hill alongside Nos 22, 20 and 18 for parking (there are 7 vehicles including a van parked there as I write) will move their parking further back up the hill including right up against the end of the yellow line. This will restrict visibility at the entrance to the lane both for turning into and out of the entrance to the three properties at 20, 22 and 26. The angle of the entrance into the drive of the properties at No 22 and 26 requires that we have to use both sides of the road to exit. This is especially required when we drive our 7m long motorhome out from our property. We would ask that the plan reverts back to the previous proposal in this case or is extended at least one cars length beyond the entrance to the lane.
 - In the previous bullet we mention 7 vehicles being displaced by the new yellow lines. It is assumed that these vehicles will park up the road from No 26 and extend up to the bend in West Hill. We are concerned that this could lead to a blind spot for all vehicles travelling down West Hill towards the Square. We assume that your proposal has considered this situation.
-

Your compromise solution is no compromise for me.

You have reduced the no waiting parking limit right throughout the village because you say "we appreciate that some properties...need to park on road."

Hence you have removed the restrictions you were going to impose throughout the village except outside my house!

I am the only resident affected on this side of West Hill as my neighbours either side have off road parking.

So your logic and decision making for everyone else should apply also to me.

Otherwise you are singling me out which is discriminatory.

I am 7 stone and 5ft tall, and have to carry shopping for my family into my house, as well as carrying heavy school books for marking every school day .

I am a single mother and am the sole provider for my youngest daughter .

My job as a school teacher would be threatened as I could not carry these books, and I would have to consider leaving the role of special teacher to disadvantaged children. A role they, and I get a lot of satisfaction from, and a crucial position within in our local community.

I cannot carry shopping from 200 yards away. That is, if I can get a parking spot within 200 yards as your policy will have the effect of forcing vehicles to park either side of the no waiting area, pushing the congestion up West Hill and preventing me parking anywhere near my property.

The problem is caused in the main, by the landscape gardening company currently based on West Hill; Kings Landscapes.

They park their transit vans from 7am beyond 6pm on West Hill and cause the most disruption.

They are I am informed, soon moving, so the main reason for the problem is about to move on.

If no waiting lines are put outside my house, I am the only resident on this side of West Hill who cannot receive food deliveries, cannot move out of the property as no removals van can park there, cannot move my aging parents into my house from their vehicle, and cannot park near my property.

This is discriminating me as you already accepted in your letter that you have changed your plan based on this issue.

It certainly can be challenged in law as it affects my house value, the rates I should pay, and will undoubtedly affect my health as it causes me stress to think I cannot feed my family, as I cannot walk shopping to my own home.

You also state this is the "narrowest part of West Hill".

This is not in fact the case.

The narrowest part is opposite the Thai restaurant and extends 20 yards out of the village.

Another narrower part is at the top of West Hill between Duke Street and The Golf Club.

Why are there no yellow lines considered there?

This is further evidence of discriminatory behaviour singling me out in terms of who should suffer for the parking emanating from the business units on West Hill, the main protagonist being Kings Landscapes who are leaving these premises.

I strongly object to this and will contest it as it affects my safety (I will have to walk long distances at night on my own in an area badly lit by street lamps) security, health, wealth and welfare.

It will move the problem up the hill and cause blind spots for children crossing from Wood Lane to get to the school bus, so is dangerous.

If traffic is not slowed down, it will race past my house at speeds in excess of 30mph and cause even more danger to passing schoolchildren .

If a car was to mount the kerb a child would be instantly killed.

At the very least, you should wait until Kings Landscapes have moved on and then survey the effects. Doing it before is not dealing with the reality of the situation and is "jumping the gun"

I strongly object to this and will contest it if it was forced upon me, especially given that I am in the highest Council Tax band with very few benefits and now face the prospect of not even being able to park outside my own house.

Parking Restrictions

We agree that there is a need to clear the view of the road ahead ,particularly when descending West Hill , travelling towards the square, most notably between 22 and 26 West Hill. It is dangerous, and blind when traffic is parked at that spot on either side of it.

It is our view though that this objective is better achieved by single yellow lines with weekday 0900 to 1800 no parking.

The issue of unsafe parking up West Hill, almost exclusively by those who work at the offices at 5 West Hill , is a weekday only issue. Typically this includes high roof vans from Kings Landscape, which obscure the view of the road.

Further, the high peaktime traffic volume , caused by the road works on the A421 and Aspley Guise being used as a cut through, is primarily a weekday only issue.

A single yellow line, weekday only working hours only parking restriction would be a better , more focussed solution.

Nonetheless we are pleased to note that there will now be no restriction outside 14 West Hill, consistent with historical practice.

The implementation of any parking restrictions on this stretch of West Hill ,**MUST** in light of the absurdly high speed of high volume traffic currently experienced (several hundred cars vans and light trucks each morning and early evening) be accompanied by some traffic calming measures. The traffic at current volumes and speed makes Aspley Guise and our part of West Hill absolutely horrible and it is destroying the road and fabric of this part of the village . Our house is covered regularly in road filth, whereas it never was 18 months ago and before . We cannot open our front windows for fumes and deafening noise.

To do otherwise would be negligent at law, and would expose CBC to full liability for any personal accident or damage to property resulting. Without calming , traffic will be faster , greater in volume and more dangerous, and CBC are on notice of that uncontested matter of fact .We would hold the council and its officers personally liable in law.

We therefore insist that a 20mph speed limit be simultaneously introduced where West Hill narrows , namely from the junction with Wood Lane ,as far as the end of the row of cottages beyond the Blue Orchid bend .

That combination of parking restrictions and 20mph speed limit is the only sensible ,rational and safe course of action. There is existing CBC precedent in Ampthill, Husborne Crawley, and also in Toddington.

Residents Permit Parking Zone- RPPZ

You have set out in your letter the circumstances where RPPZ s can be helpful.

Rather than railway commuters outlined in your letter , our equivalent issue is the 15 to 20 overspill vehicles of commuters ,visitors to the offices at 5 West Hill as well as a procession of courier and Kings Landscape vans. On a typical weekday it is impossible to park outside the houses in Westhill, and go safely about normal household activities , especially with young children. The circumstances are precisely the same, in fact identical , as you outline in your letter as being reasons to justify a RPPZ.

There is ample room for a resident parking zone from and including outside 14 West Hill to and around the square. This would greatly help the residents in this area who otherwise have no access to off street parking, and find it impossible to properly enjoy their homes on weekdays and some Saturday mornings.

We and our neighbours are happy to pay the normal tariff for a RPPZ, and some of the necessary marking is already there.

Therefore , we insist that a RPPZ is introduced.

The single white line on the square side of the build out opposite Moore Place

Please clarify the status of this line . According to the highway code it has no status. It appears to have been applied incorrectly. It extends past a kerb which has not been dropped. We presume it is there to highlight the build out. What is its status in law? .It is currently the cause of periodic , and on their part aggressive , argument with the residents of the old newsagent/shop, and it needs to be clarified/and or altered in terms of physical extent .Please advise.

We are happy to meet you on site to discuss and illustrate further any of these issues.

Further to your letter dated 22nd October 2015 I am pleased that the change to the proposal has not affected the plan for lines outside our home and that you have finally recognised that as this is the narrowest part of West Hill action needs to be taken before serious accident or incident.

However I do have a few points again, I wish to make in support off the proposal;

In your letter you make no reference to the restrictions being necessary due to damage being done to property or the hedges in the village being destroyed or more importantly emergency services being able to pass through etc.

No one has an automatic right to park outside their own home, you buy a home without parking and own several cars tough!

Parking in front of our entrance where the road narrows makes it difficult to get in or out and let the passing traffic flow freely.

The objectors mind set that parking cars slows the traffic down is completely ludicrous, of course unless it is outside their homes then I suspect they may feel differently. Speeding traffic is a different issue. I invite them to come and witness what actually happens, watch our cctv videos and pictures. They can help me pick the litter up that is thrown in our drive whilst people wait in frustration to get through.

With regards to allowing residents parking I am totally against this proposal. For example my neighbour runs a building business from home with several private and company vehicles. He had a driveway for all of these vehicles but chose to build a lockup instead so are we to have these vehicles permanently obstructing our entrance as that is exactly what would happen in these allocated spaces?

I have enclosed a photo taken today whilst I sit here, of a lorry having to stop and wait its wheels clearly over the white line. Perhaps someone can explain, when vehicles currently allowed to park across my entrance, how would he get through without coming into my driveway?

I can tell you what happens vehicles drive up the bank or damage what's left of the wooden barriers to avoid each other. With regards to us we have no hope of getting in or out.

The bank is being destroyed and we will loose the hedge this is clear from the other photos supplied of how high they need to go to avoid each other.

I trust sense will prevail and you do the right thing and paint the lines!