

## Appeal APP/J1860/W/24/3348743. Note on travel

Traffic in Martley village is a major concern for residents. This has been evident at public meetings to discuss recent planning applications (including that by Hayfield Homes) and in the public response to the revised neighbourhood development plan.

There is local concern that traffic problems will worsen because the two new estates (and the proposed Hayfield Estate) are located to the West of the village, which will result in many more journeys to the North to Birmingham and East to Worcester passing through the T-junction in the centre of the village. There is already severe congestion in the centre of the village and along the Worcester Road at the times pupils travel to and from school. Both schools have extensive catchment areas and the great majority of pupils arrive by school bus and by private car. The traffic problems on the Worcester Road between the schools are now so severe that the primary school finds it safer to ferry children from the Chantry School (where the buses park) using their own minibus rather than attempt to escort them on foot across the road.

Travel to school by car is common even for pupils who live within walking distance of the schools. This is because travel on foot along narrow footpaths can be difficult or dangerous (particularly if there is more than one child to escort), because of wet weather, or because parents travel to work after dropping their children at school. The proportion of pupils who would travel by car to the schools from the proposed estate would be affected by the distance involved (a mean of 1.1km each way) and because of the need to cross a public road at the busiest times of day. The National Travel Survey reports that 78% of journeys to school for primary school children are made by private car where the trip length is between one and two miles. Secondary school children are, however, more likely to walk distances of this length.

It is possible that an influx of children into the village after the completion of the proposed new estate would simply displace children from the remoter reaches of the schools' catchment areas. But displacement of this kind would have the effect of replacing the number of children who arrive by bus with those who are brought by private car. This would paradoxically increase traffic. Additional demand for school places might also lead to an increase in the number of people attending the two schools. The Chantry School has expanded in recent years and may well do so in future. The primary school has capacity for more pupils.

The travel data in the Statement of Common Ground (23-0520) under-estimates the traffic problems in Martley because it uses only national data from mean numbers of vehicles in rural areas rather than from a survey of local transport in Martley. The latter is essential because Martley is unusual in having both a primary and secondary school with entrances on opposite sides of the main road out of the village. As in many rural areas, the peak travel times occur when schools open and close, which for the latter is between 1500 and 1600, rather than the 1600-1700 peak time used in the travel plan.

Some of the other travel data needs to be amended. The list of bus services (Table 2.1) is based on a national database which can give unreliable results. For instance, it mysteriously includes as a local service the 420 service between Bromyard and Hereford (both several kilometres from Martley), and double counts services which run alternatively on school days or non-school days. Bus services from Martley are in case of limited use for most residents. Buses are used by many students travelling to the Sixth Form College and the Technical College in Worcester, but by few people at other times of the day. From personal experience, most journeys from Martley during daytimes collect only two or three passengers in the village. It is not possible to use a bus to visit family on Sundays (when there is no service), to go out to Worcester in the evening (when there is no service) or to go to work (because the last bus leaves Worcester at 1745). It is therefore not surprising that the 2021 Census found that only 0.2% of travel to work journeys from Martley Parish were by bus.

The travel plan in the Statement of Common Ground overstates opportunities for cycling in the village, where cycling is rare because of the danger involved in cycling along narrow lanes occupied by wide motor vehicles and because of the hilly local terrain. As an example, the distance on a map to the Apple Tree Kitchen and Restaurant is 4.4km (as shown in Table 2.2), but would involve a climb of 30 metres, followed by a swift and dangerous descent of 65 metres, followed by another climb of 45 metres. Martley is a popular location for competitive cycling because of the challenges it presents, but these challenges rule out cycle travel for almost everyone else.

In the absence of an effective local bus service or the possibility of cycling, people in Martley overwhelmingly use cars, as would residents in the proposed development. The National Travel Survey shows that 60% of households in rural villages have access to two or more motor vehicles and 33% to one vehicle, while only 7% do not have a car. This compares with 32% of households in urban conurbations who do not have a car and only 23% who have more than one car. People in rural villages make 80% more car journeys/year than people in urban conurbations, and travel a mean of 2.5 times further in each journey. The proposed housing would therefore be yet another car-dependent suburban estate, albeit one in a rural location with longer travel distances and a greater negative impact on our national Net Zero Strategy.

I therefore respectfully recommend that the failure of the appellants to correctly address the impact of their proposed estate on local travel contribute to rejecting their appeal.

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