

Written submission (objector):

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Resident 30 years and former Parish Councillor for Beech Hill 18 years

Since the first application back in 2007 for 100 car parking spaces at Mortimer Station, I have supported meaningful additional parking but not where previous planning applications have suggested on what is currently a green field (productive agricultural land) site and outside the village envelope.

The road safety aspect of this application would be a disaster waiting to happen with two entrances either side of a high crest in the centre of the bridge which gives no view of oncoming traffic. This is to be managed by introducing a traffic light system. What is this going to do with up to 200 cars per hour passing at peak times along Station Road (WBC figures) with traffic trying to enter or exit the two car parking areas? With regard to the pedestrian footpath common sense needs to be considered for those either in a wheelchair or pushing a buggy say with other children in tow.

The current coronavirus has made the Government sit up and reassess the way we will be working in the future. High on the agenda will be travel, the need to reduce the carbon footprint by having more of us working from home and conducting meetings via the Internet. Forward thinking companies and businesses are already successfully doing this.

The Government is encouraging more people to walk and cycle, for this to happen safely, there needs to be some major work done on local and wider infrastructure allowing pedestrians and cyclists to do this safely.

Much money has been spent in areas such as Thatcham with bespoke cycle routes, surely it would be more sensible for SMPC to engage with WBC staff in designing and commissioning cycle routes and footpaths. SMPC's proposed scheme will encourage car usage, by drawing in from a larger catchment area putting even more strain on the country roads which is damaging the rural environment.

Local authorities need to create a sustainable transport system connecting local villages and communities with their nearest railway stations and/or with Mere Oak Park and Ride

Why not extend the existing car park for a trial period by entering into an agreement with the owners of Jewells Yard, to test if parking increases and to reveal how many travellers are prepared to pay the parking fee to park? This would be a way forward of utilising a current brownfield site and maybe some of the land adjoining which is of low agricultural use rather than have an urban car park being used for five days a week at the very most. The greenfield site proposed will need floodlighting and CCTV cameras, is this not contrary to Stratfield Mortimer's vote not to have street lighting in the village. Why is it right to impose this on some residents?

I concur with WBC Planning Officer supported by WBC Highways Department recommendations against this application for change of use of land. I would expect WBC Councillors of the planning committee to support and endorse their WBC Officers views and proactively plan for the future.