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21 April 2024

Dear County Council,

I am writing to submit my objection and comments with reference to planning application FUL/2024/0001 West Winch Housing Access Road, particularly with regard to travel and transport provision for local residents of West Winch, Setchey and the proposed new development.

I appreciate the need for additional housing and road access and would not object to an amended scheme with acceptable provision for walking and cycling in the area.

1. A number of additional signalised crossings are shown in West Winch. Whilst the provision of extra crossings is clearly a good thing, this suggests that there will still be a considerable amount of traffic passing through the centre of West Winch. The 20mph zone is not clearly marked but appears to be very short. Given that the relief road takes a longer route, surely there should be additional measures such as traffic calming to dissuade motor vehicles from travelling through West Winch?
2. A further signalised crossing is proposed just south of the new roundabout at Gravelhill Lane, but south of this there is no additional crossing of the A10, and not even a refuge until Oakwood Corner. I understand that this is outside the boundary of the scheme, but the residents of Setchey will be affected by the additional traffic on this part of the A10, so surely the impact should be taken into account, especially given that at least one crossing is already desperately needed, even without additional traffic.
3. The proposed shared use route, which is the only viable option for cycling, is shown crossing the road twice if following the route from the southern to the northern end of the scheme (ie. travelling from Setchey to King's Lynn). This adds distance and inconvenience to the cycling route, which will not encourage active travel. I believe it would make more sense to include additional cycling provision on both sides of the road.
4. A small piece of land is shown on the map to the west of the proposed new roundabout at Gravelhill Lane, but there is no indication of how this land will be used. The shared used path appears to diverge from the road at this point and run along the boundaries of the houses on the west side of the current A10. Will lighting be provided along this section of the path, and will it be in view of the road? I am concerned that users will not feel safe on this path if, for example, it is unlit and/or screened from the road.
5. The proposed new roundabout at Gravelhill Lane appears to have no cycling or walking facilities whatsoever. This is totally unsuitable for anyone wishing to travel on foot or by bike between the housing on the new development and Setchey, as it appears they would be expected to travel along two sides of a triangle with an unnecessary diversion to the north to cross the current A10; surely a more direct route should be provided. I suspect that in reality people would cross at the new roundabout and walk on the verge or cycle on the road, leading to reduced safety.

From where I live just south of the area covered by the scheme, I travel to and from work on the Hardwick Industrial Estate at peak times 5 days a week, and make approximately 85% of these journeys by bicycle, with journeys on the remaining days made by car (lack of public transport provision means the first bus arrives too late). Currently the journey by bicycle takes around 20 minutes, often with a minute or two spent waiting to cross the A10 to reach the shared use path which is on the right when travelling up the A10 in a northerly direction (car drivers will often slow to let me out if I am in my car, but this is rarely the case when I am cycling as I have to cross two lanes of traffic to reach the cycle path and it is not clear to drivers where I am going). The shared use path is not of a good standard but does allow the journey to be made without crossing the road again until just south of the Hardwick Roundabout. Due to the increased traffic, I estimate that this first crossing of the A10 may well take an additional 2-4 minutes (I note that Transport Assessment Appendix 7 suggests there will be no increase in traffic on the A10 south of the development, but this simply does not seem credible), after which I would have to cross back to the left hand side of the road and then back again to the right, potentially adding another minute at each of the signalised crossings. The relocation of the signalised crossing just south of the Hardwick Roundabout is an improvement and would allow me to cross both north and southbound traffic at once, perhaps saving one minute, but the crossing on Beveridge Way will have little impact and I note with disappointment that no other improvements are planned to the current poor walking and cycling facilities on the Hardwick Roundabout, which are already well used and will link in to both the current A10 and the proposed new road. Further, I note from the Transport Assessment that some additional traffic is expected at the Hardwick Road/Scania Way junction, which seems likely to add another 2-3 minutes to my journey. Overall, then, I estimate that this scheme is likely to add 4-8 minutes to my journey in each direction, making active travel to work (and the shops at Hardwick Road) a less attractive proposition. Whilst I have used my own journey as an example, this would apply to anyone living in Setchey and wanting to cycle into King's Lynn, or indeed to anyone living in King's Lynn and cycling to work in Setchey. It seems to me that in its current form this new development constitutes a setback to active travel and misses the opportunity to make much needed improvements which could benefit the environment as well as the health and wellbeing of local residents.

I very much hope that this application will not be approved without binding conditions to ensure that local residents are able to walk and cycle around the area with ease.

Yours faithfully,

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