

From: mike o'sullivan [mailto:mos@phonecoop.coop]
Sent: 13 March 2013 18:43
To: Kirk, Debbie; Fenwick, Nick
Cc: Brian White
Subject: COFFERIDGE CLOSE - Traffic Issues

DK: |||
With no thought of prolonging the debate I nevertheless must offer a final final comment in response to your Council's traffic comments on my last minute comments.

A:: My first point was:
The developer argument which your traffic engineer and the DCC paper supports, is that Britain's economic downturn will go on and on and that this justifies the assumption for a decrease in traffic growth within Stony Stratford also for 'ever'. The more reasonable assumption, based on established long-run evidence, is that as economic activity recovers (this being firm Government policy) so will traffic growth.

Your traffic dep. says:
The Senior Highway Engineer is not making any assumption that Stony Stratford's traffic growth will decrease for 'ever'..... but (has) used the traffic forecast growth figures that are available from nationally recognised and accepted authority.

Comment:
I am relieved to learn that your traffic department have not ventured into national economic forecasting. I assume, as we all do, that they subscribe to the Government's expectation that in due course there will be a revival of GB's economic fortunes. With this will most probably come an expansion of car ownership and use. My concern is that if George Osborn turns the economic 'corner' by, say, the end of the next 2 years or so, such a happy event would just about coincide with the opening of the revitalised Cofferridge Close, assuming redevelopment was to proceed. Thus Stony Stratford would be donated a scheme in 2015 or thereabouts, arguably bigger than it needed to be because it was based on traffic impact levels that by then would be observed to be a serious under-estimate. It seems to me that your highways people are too ready to embrace the slightest change in traffic data and not be guided by a more prudent middle to long-run interperation of associated events. I think that you are being poorly advised.

B:: My second point was:
The developer's use (and MKC's support) of the PM traffic flow measurement is strange: the standard basis for calculation is the AM peak. More people seek to get to work at one time (9.00 am) than is the case for the evening rush hour where there is a greater time 'spread' of home-bound commuting. This obviously gives a lower 'peak' reading for the PM situation. Confusing PM with AM misrepresents the true traffic picture for Stony.

Your traffic dep. says:

The developer's use of PM traffic flow is acceptable. The peak flows for the existing food store have been established as the PM peak on a Friday afternoon and on Saturday lunchtime and this is confirmed to be consistent with all food retail outlets.....the Senior Highway Engineer has never heard of food retail traffic peak flows occurring in the morning period. The Senior Highway Engineer therefore do not believe there has been any confusion between AM and PM time periods.

Comment:

This response is quite breathtaking.

Your advise is that a PM traffic flow measurement is "acceptable" - is "acceptable" the best that can be contrived? It sounds a highly marginal sort of 'plus'!

In any case your advisors have missed the point. The consideration is not peak shopping times but overall town peak traffic flows. There might indeed be a Friday afternoon traffic surge related to food shopping but this would drop off come that evening's rush hour and overall a medium size 'plateau' would result but not a 'peak'. The AM traffic flow measurement would be greater and is the one to be guided by if true flow pressures are to be understood.

In any case, the current store and its possible replacement do/will not act as 'supermarkets'. Basically it is/will be enhanced 'corner' shops or 'Metro' and do/will not attracting great volumes of car-born shoppers. A recognised proportion of Budgen's present clientel walk in and this will continue as the store essentially is and will remain a 'top-up' sort of facility due to its highly limited catchment area and demographic mix - something that the developer acknowledges.

Relying on PM as opposed to AM traffic flow data flies in the face of all normal good traffic engineering practice. Each situation differs and needs to be individually considered but, in my view, your traffic people have not made the case for abandoning this convention in the instance of Stony Stratford.

I think that you are being poorly advised.

I would ask that you bring this response to the attention of your DCC Committee as it has relevance in determining the application.

Thank you,

M.O'Sullivan. Dip.Arch. Dip.TP. MRTPI.