

Whitworth Town Council

Council Offices, Civic Hall, Market Street, Whitworth, Lancs. OL12 8DP



For Update

Mr Neil Birtles
Planning Department
Rossendale Borough Council
Futures Park
Bacup
Lancashire
OL13 0BB

Thursday 21 March 2013

Dear Neil,

RE: planning application no 2013/0076 (Erection of single storey retail unit (279sqm) with associated car parking and creation of vehicular access from Market Street (resubmission with amended scheme) at Mills Street, Whitworth, OL12 8QW)

At a meeting of Whitworth Town Council tonight (Thursday 21 March 2013) the abovementioned planning application was considered. At the meeting my Council resolved to object to the planning application on the grounds of loss of residential amenity, inadequate parking, highways safety fears, concerns regarding deliveries and an inability to cope with the large vehicles the unit would require. Specifically:

1. **LOSS OF RESIDENTIAL AMENITY:**
 - o Traffic noise for residents (deliveries and vehicular visitors) would be unacceptable.
 - o The drawings do not show any low-level wall to protect residences opposite from car lights and light from the unit itself. [The agent said she would take this suggestion away with her].
 - o Threat to availability of parking for residents opposite the site.
2. **INADEQUATE PARKING:**
 - o Parking on the A671 is already inadequate and there is a suggestion that this could be used as overspill if required; my Council considers that this is not possible.
 - o The car park is small in relation to the anticipated use of such a site; as a comparison, the Co-op store car park close to the site in Whitworth is regularly full and overflows onto Thorneylea and the car park next to the doctors.
 - o Although the agent suggests one disabled space is adequate and compliant with planning law, my Council considers this to be inadequate.
3. **HIGHWAY SAFETY FEARS:**
 - o My Council feels that the increase in traffic, through users of the unit, delivery and waste disposal vehicles would be inappropriate for a site next to the A671, the main and only road through the town.
 - o Concerns were raised about the turning circle required for access and egress onto the main road, and the potential for danger and disruption.
4. **DELIVERIES:**
 - o My Council believes that the swept path assessment does not allay the concerns of the Council; it considers that a delivery vehicle could not access the delivery area without causing significant danger to the pedestrians, cyclists and other vehicular traffic on the

site, and without the potential for causing significant disruption to the flow of traffic on the A671.

- It considers that vehicles of the size and nature as detailed in the swept path assessment would not be able to manage a turn to leave or enter the site at a point where the road is no wider than 21 feet.
- There is no consideration of more than one delivery vehicle arriving at a time; there is no extra parking available to accommodate a waiting delivery vehicle or waste disposal vehicle.

16 members of the public attended the meeting, including representatives of the site owners and also Ms Debbie Smith, agent for the application. Ms Smith responded to some of the comments made by the public and councillors in attendance; perhaps it may be useful for me to summarise some of the points raised by the members of the public and councillors, which may help to feed into the considerations of the application:

1. A councillor mentioned that when the Co-op site received its planning approval, a condition was that the entrance onto Market Street (A671) must be splayed.
2. An HGV driver in attendance stated that vehicles of the size and type detailed in the swept path assessment could not access the site, and that no considerations had been made for the rear overhang of the vehicles; additionally, were a larger vehicle to park in a bay closest to the delivery area the delivery vehicle would in effect become marooned.
3. Concerns were raised about the impact on existing businesses, and references made to RBC's Core Strategy which supports 'increased diversity' in town centres; a member of the public suggested that this application would in fact duplicate and smother already existing services.
4. There was confusion over the listing of the site as a single storey retail unit, when the area in the roof space was to be allocated as office space.
5. The bin store seems inadequate for a retail unit and is smaller than a school has.
6. There does not appear to be a retail assessment with the application.
7. The planning, design and access statement includes details of a carpet shop and newsagents close to the site on Market Street – these shops have not existed for some considerable time (around 10 years or so).

Over and above the agent and the representatives of the owners of the site, no-one present offered comments in favour of the application.

My Council asks that these comments be fed into the considerations of the application, and that the Town Council office is informed of the date of the Development Control Committee meeting. As Clerk, I would also be very grateful if you could drop me an email confirming receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely,



Karen Douglas
Town Clerk