

THE SHAW RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Community Submission Against the Development of Ridgeway Farm

Summary and analysis of the objections contained in the community emails sent to the
Shaw Residents Association (SRA)

Kevin Fisher

6 May 2012

Refused Outline Planning Application: 10/0457

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/A/11/2166277/NWF

Ridgeway Farm

Following a call for support, the Shaw Residents' Association received 665 emails from the local community voicing objections to the Ridgeway Farm application. These emails provided the mandate for the SRA to speak on behalf of the community and the basis for the evidence provided in this report.

2 **Introduction**

4 My name is Kevin Fisher and I am a resident of Shaw, a member of the Shaw Residents'
6 Association (SRA) and took the lead in developing this report. The SRA has been in existence
since 1981 and is supported by a constitution. Meetings, issues, minutes etc are all held in
the public domain at www.shawresidents.org.uk.

Requesting the Mandate to Speak on Behalf of Residents

8 A door step or public venue petition was not used as it is believed such demonstrations of
10 support can be undermined. Therefore, the SRA's mandate has been derived through
residents sending emails containing the names of anyone in the household over the age of
12 18 against the development together with their full address. The community emails file
submitted with this paper contain the arguments used by residents against the
development.

14 The effort to write an email to an unknown person is significantly greater than signing a
16 petition and therefore demonstrates more acute levels of public feeling. Whilst the effort is
not quite as great as walking to a polling station, the awareness of the need to vote in a
18 local election would have been much higher than the awareness of the need to send an
email in support of the SRA's mandate. The turn out in the Shaw ward for the recent local
election was 29%.

20 **The Mandate Results**

22 Appendix 1 shows the SRA received 665 emails from 660 homes, representing 1346 adult
residents providing the association the right to speak on their behalf:

- 24 • *Sparcells, Peatmoor and Common Platt*: 378 emails representing 772 people and 368
residences (five votes were received by other means). This 'turn out' equates to
31.7% of homes in these three estates.
- 26 • *Other West Swindon Estates*: 241 emails received representing 511 people and 244
homes (nine votes were received by other means)
- 28 • *Outside West Swindon*: 46 emails received representing 63 people and 48 homes
(four votes were received by other means)

30 Available with this paper are two further documents:

- 32 1. A copy of all the emails received (with email addresses and phone numbers removed to
protect people's privacy). It should be noted that about 55% of these emails contain
additional reasoning from the respondents as to why they are objecting
- 34 2. A list of all names and addresses of respondents

36 **The community requests refusal of the appeal because:**

- 38 1. To approve the development would be un-democratic
2. To approve the development would result in a significant negative impact on the quality
of life of existing residents and generations to come

40 The rest of this paper provides a summary of the objections contained in the 665 emails
received from the community together with evidence in support of these arguments.

44 **1. To approve the development would be un-democratic**

46 **Democracy is about entrusting local policy decision making to locally elected representatives**

48 All local Swindon councillors have expressed their opposition to the development together
with Robert Buckland MP. In Wiltshire council members for Purton, Royal Wootton Bassett
50 and Cricklade also expressed opposition and James Gray MP has written to a Peatmoor
resident stating “you should know that I am against this development and have written a
number of times to Planning Inspectorate to raise my concerns”.

52
54 During the 13 January 2011 Swindon full council meeting a motion (104) was passed which
stated **“This Council considers that this proposal is totally unacceptable to the people of
West Swindon”**.

56
58 Appendix 2 contains letters sent to the Shaw Residents Association from all three leaders of
Swindon’s main political parties, demonstrating solid cross party unity against this
application.

- 60 • Rod Bluh (Conservative) “The short answer is that Swindon Borough Council is opposed
to it”
62 • Stan Pajak (Liberal democrats): “the application is not wanted, not needed, not
supported and will cause a dramatic lowering in the quality of life for residents who live
64 nearby”
66 • Jim Grant (Labour): “We are against this development firstly because we do not believe
the land proposed for development is sustainable”

68 The Wiltshire Council planning committee voted unanimously against the application with a
number of elected individuals speaking against it; (Robert Buckland MP (also speaking on
70 behalf of James Gray MP), Swindon councillor Nick Martin, local Wiltshire councillors
Geoffrey Greenaway, Jacqui Lay, Mollie Groom, Peter Colmer and Peter Doyle).

72

**Approval of this application would question the role, mandate and authority of locally
elected representatives.**

74 **Democracy is about listening and acting on the wishes of the electorate**

76 Over 1000 objections were submitted to the original planning application and 1346 adult
members of the electorate have emailed their objections to the SRA.

78 It can be determined that, excluding the over 600 objections received via a petition, 58
homes (see Appendix 1) in Sparcells, Peatmoor and Common Platt had registered their
objections on the planning portal, together with their full address, but had not sent an email
80 to the SRA. It is assumed these homes felt objecting once should be enough in a democracy.
If these 58 residences are added to the SRA mandate it shows 36.7% have provided their full
82 address in their objection. Furthermore it can be argued that since support was via email,

Internet penetration¹ should be taken into account thus making the SRA's mandate higher still.

84

This proposed development has stimulated extremely significant levels of objection from local residents and members of the electorate. To approve it would be contrary to their wishes.

Democracy empowers local elected members to coordinate developments in a strategic and structured manner

86

As residents, we rely on local authorities to take a structured approach to housing developments and understand that any decisions about future housing needs are taken within a strategic framework, developed, at a cost to the tax payer, by local authorities.

88

Swindon's Core Strategy does not require any development on its borders to meet its housing targets.

90

The Wiltshire Core Strategy places much emphasis on the citizens' desire to ensure non-coalescence of Wiltshire towns with Swindon and clearly rules out any development in the area known as "West of Swindon". It also contains the following quotes:

92

- "to help reduce out commuting" – 99% of Ridgeway Farm residents will need to out-commute in order to reach a place of employment

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- "build resilient communities" and "to ensure that infrastructure is in place to support our communities". – No commercial facilities will be provided within this new community and council taxes raised will not benefit the existing communities whose infrastructure will be strained past breaking point

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- "protecting the open countryside, as well as the uniqueness of individual settlements, both of which the Core Strategy recognises are prize objectives by the local community, are therefore an important objective for this strategy and will be taken forward by appropriate and strong policy mechanisms" – To approve this development would mean these are words are without substance

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To allow a development that is not included in strategic development plans would render such plans futile and a tragic waste of tax payers' money. It would also bring fear to communities across the country of speculative developers winning the right to develop wherever they please.

¹ OFCOM data for Q1 2011 shows 77% penetration across the UK. UKOM/Nielson data indicates internet enablement scores for the South West are the lowest in England

106 **The localism bill is about “reform to make the planning system more democratic”²**

108 Within the foreword of the same publication referenced in this chapter’s title are the
110 following quotes written by Greg Clark MP:

- 110 • “...it leaves people feeling ‘done to’ and imposed upon – the very opposite of the sense
112 of participation and involvement on which a healthy democracy thrives”
- 112 • “It is to help people and their locally elected representatives to achieve their own
114 ambitions”
- 114 • “...reform to make the planning system more democratic..”
- 116 • Finally, the foreword starts with “the time has come to disperse power more widely in
116 Britain today” – the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, Coalition Agreement,
May 2010.

118 Regional Spatial Strategies set by central government have been abolished for many reasons
120 not least because local communities felt “done to and imposed upon” by them. Instead we
now have core strategies which enable locally elected members to work with communities
as they develop housing needs in a strategic manner.

To approve this development will send a signal to the whole of the country’s electorate that

- **The localism act strengthens the ability of developers to bypass the democratic process for large scale developments, the very ones that have the biggest impact on more peoples’ lives**
- **Core strategies are simply the old spatial strategies under a different name since any non strategic development will simply be approved by central government**
- **If locally elected representatives do not allow developers to build outside of the core strategy framework, it will simply get approved through appeal**
- **The quote “disperse power more widely in Britain today” is up for careful interpretation**

122

² Rt Hon Greg Clark MP and minister of state for decentralisation. Quote taken from his forward on page 3 of ‘A plain English guide to the localism bill’ June 2011

124 **2. To approve the development would result in a significant negative impact on the**
quality of life of existing residents and generations to come

126 **Key arterial roads in West Swindon are already operating beyond capacity at peak times**

126 **Current road infrastructure situation**

128 Mead Way is the main arterial road through West Swindon and, since the development in
128 the North of Swindon, “is already operating at capacity during peak periods³”. The Mouldon
130 View development (Appendix 3, Map 1) of 200 homes has further exacerbated this problem
130 while creating additional dangers to road users due to the ‘T’ junction entrance to the
130 development.

132 As a result of Mead Way congestion, drivers search for “rat runs” through housing estates.
132 In the morning peak period by driving to the west through residential roads such as Swinley
134 Drive it is possible to rejoin Mead Way further south and have priority on the roundabout,
134 thus further encouraging the practice.

136 In the evening peak period, traffic heading north on Mead Way queues for most of its length
136 as is depicted in Appendix 3, Picture 1. As drivers reach the southern Sparcells roundabout
138 (Appendix 3, Map 1), many turn right into Sparcells Drive and rejoin the queue at the
138 northern roundabout, thus jumping ahead of a few cars in the tailback and having the
140 satisfaction of feeling they are making progress. In the morning peak period, exiting
140 Sparcells by the northern roundabout can take many minutes since the main road to the
142 right is ‘blind’ as it curves off to the right.

144 Recent road works around the Renault Roundabout (Appendix 3, Map 4) were undertaken
144 over successive Sundays, demonstrating the local authorities’ recognition that it is not
146 possible to have any controls on Mead Way on a Saturday let alone during the week. Even
146 so, the Sunday controls caused delays of more than 15 minutes to drivers.

148 Whilst recognising it is not an objective survey, the following anecdotal evidence from
148 residents’ helps to personalise the true extent of the problems all users face on Mead Way:

- 150 • “It took 30 minutes to travel from the North of Mead Way to the Great Western Way
150 roundabout”
- 152 • “It took 40 minutes to travel from Sparcells to Blagrove” (M4, Junction 16)
- 152 • One resident timed his journey from Gairlock Close in Sparcells to the Westmead
154 Industrial estate roundabout and stated: To cover the 1.4 miles it took 12 minutes 50
154 seconds leaving at 08:02 on the 18th April and 11 minutes, 45 seconds leaving at 08:10
156 on the 19th April.
 - 156 ○ This example shows it took the resident about eight and a half minutes to travel
158 one mile along Mead Way which is equivalent to an average speed of 7 mph.

158 Of the emails received by the SRA that contained additional rationale for being against this
160 development, virtually all state that the road infrastructure in West Swindon cannot cope
160 and 30% of these mention Mead Way specifically.

West Swindon’s arterial roads are not “at capacity” they are over capacity at peak times. To approve this development will force additional commuter traffic into residential streets not designed for such volumes of traffic further extending already unacceptable journey times and creating more traffic dangers in residential areas.

³ Wiltshire Council Strategic Planning committee, agenda document, 15 February 2012 page 65 and 66

The impact on West Swindon roads from other developments

162 It is understood that as each new development is proposed, if the impact on a highway is
164 less than a certain percentage, it can be ignored as a consideration. Unfortunately the
cumulative effect of these small percentages is rarely considered.

166 Tadpole Farm is another new strategic development proposal to the north of Swindon
which, if approved, will itself create significant additional traffic through West Swindon rat
168 runs. If Ridgeway Farm traffic is added into the equation, the result will be catastrophic to
the lives of West Swindon residents for generations to come.

170 Exacerbating the situation is the development of the 200 homes, mentioned earlier, at
Mouldon View. This site was approved despite the objections of residents. A further
172 application for 50 more houses has been received by Wiltshire Council and it has received
over 60⁴ objections. This site demonstrates the (understandable) desire for developers to
174 maximise their profits through piggy backing additional developments on infrastructure
costs they have already incurred. As such, the community are concerned that 700 houses on
176 Ridgeway Farm would be the minimum number eventually built as the developer seeks to
expand the site to the west, north and east

178 The situation of planned builds that will impact roads in North and West Swindon is actually
even worse since:

- 180 1. There are another 100 houses to be built in the Haydon III area of North Swindon
2. The former school site between Moredon Road and Akers Way has 273 homes being
constructed
- 182 3. There is capacity for a further 150 houses on the former Hreod Parkway school site
south of Akers Way.
- 184 4. A further 300 houses have planning permission on the St Andrews Ridge / Blunsdon
Ridge Site

186 Add into this the 150 houses at Mouldon View still to be completed and the 1,700 proposed
at Tadpole Farm and there are 2673 new homes either being built or proposed, many of
188 which will use Mead Way and West Swindon rat runs in order to get to the town centre or
Motorway.

West Swindon's roads are set to become even more congested even without Ridgeway Farm. To approve Ridgeway Farm will be the 'straw that breaks the camel's back'.

To allow Ridgeway Farm to be built will be to ignore the 'toe in the door' impact this development will have on the remaining countryside between Swindon and Purton and Swindon and Cricklade.

190

⁴ As of 28 April 2012

192 **Traffic data used by the developer and Swindon Borough Council (SBC) appears at odds**
193 **with reality**

194 SBC states this development would result in an 88%⁵ increase in traffic along Swinley Drive.
195 WSP⁶ traffic analysis suggests the departure rate of traffic during the AM peak period from
196 Ridgeway Farm would be 0.445 per dwelling. The WSP report is dated 2007 and it is not
197 clear when and at what location on the road the pcu number of 80 was measured by
198 Swindon Borough Council.

199 A survey with 304 respondents was carried out by the SRA during April 2012, the results of
200 which can be found in Appendix 4. It suggests the average number of cars per household is
201 1.9 and the number of vehicles on the road per household during peak times is 1.26 not
202 0.445.

203 A count of vehicles in May 2012 heading south on Swinley Drive during the 08:00 – 09:00
204 peak hour showed 198⁷ vehicles passing the Nightwood Copse bus stop⁸ and 309 vehicles
205 reaching the roundabout at the southern end of Swinley Drive, giving an average of 253
206 vehicles, significantly higher than the 80 used by SBC.

207 Whilst it is possible to try and undermine the SRA data based on sample size and
208 demographics, it is equally as easy to undermine the ‘official’ data based on logic, local
209 knowledge and common sense.

210 As further evidence of this, if SBC are stating Ridgeway Farm will send 70 more pcu’s onto
211 Swinley Drive and WSP are stating the development will produce just 311⁹ vehicles at peak
212 time, it implies that just 22% of cars leaving Ridgeway Farm will use the one of two southern
213 accesses that is not “at capacity”. This is clearly an illogical conclusion to draw and questions
214 the validity of these ‘official’ predictions.

215 The conclusion that can be drawn from this data is that peak time traffic on Swinley Drive
216 today is about 250 vehicles. If logic is put to one side and it is assumed only 22% of
217 Ridgeway Farm traffic uses Swinley drive then it will add between a further 70 and 198
218 vehicles at peak time¹⁰, resulting in between 320 and 448 vehicles.

219 However, if common sense is allowed to prevail and an assumption that a sensible 50% of
220 Ridgeway Farm traffic will exit onto Swinley drive, the increase in traffic will be between
221 156¹¹ and 441¹² vehicles bringing the volume to somewhere between 406 and 691 vehicles
222 in peak time. Should the later become reality it will have a massive impact on everyone
trying to travel in West Swindon not least the bus companies.

⁵ 80 to 150 pcu’s (70 additional cars)

⁶ WSP technical note to Wiltshire County Council and Swindon Borough Council Ref ‘trip rates, Ridgeway Farm, 3rd July 2007

⁷ Cars, buses, vans and trucks all counted as 1. Bikes and motorbikes not counted

⁸ Just after the access to Peatmoor Village Centre

⁹ 700 x 0.445

¹⁰ 1.26 / 0.445 = 2.83. If 0.445 creates 70 more pcu’s (150 – 80), it follows that 1.26 would create 70 x 2.83 = 198 pcu’s

¹¹ 700 x 0.445 x 0.5 = 156

¹² 700 x 1.26 x 0.5 = 441

To approve this development would be to base a decision on questionable traffic data

- **The ‘official’ prediction of an 88% increase in traffic on Swinley Drive is based on data that seems at odds with reality**
- **The real increase in traffic on Swinley Drive will be measured in the hundreds of percent**

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Crossing Swinley Drive today is a dangerous activity

226 Swinley Drive is a winding, twisting residential road with numerous blind bends and a shape
228 which allows traffic noise from all directions, meaning the basic crossing rules of ‘stop, look,
230 listen’ cannot be used when there is a regular traffic stream. The road passes Peatmoor
School (refer to appendix 3, Map 2) and already suffers from speeding motorists¹³. A parent
reports that when walking her children to school, the rules of crossing are more akin to
“listen, wait, wait, wait, guess, hope and run”.

232 When driving south from the centre of Ridgeway Farm, drivers will start with an additional
300 metres (making 700 m) of relatively straight road, allowing speeds to reach high levels.
234 The road then takes on a greater than a 90 degree blind bend, precisely where adults and
children cross to reach the primary school, Peatmoor Village Centre or Peatmoor Lagoon. It
236 is estimated of the 210 children attending the school; about 88¹⁴ live on the west side of
Swinley Drive and will therefore be required to cross it on their way to school. Whilst it is
238 clear some parents use a car for the school run, it is expected even more will choose to drive
if Swinley Drive becomes more problematic to cross by foot.

240 Clearly pedestrian crossings would go some way to alleviate the problems, however high
speed, a sharp blind bend followed by a ‘safe’ crossing point is not normally a recipe for
242 safety. Also given the length and residential character of the drive unless a great number of
crossings are put in place, many adults and children alike will cross where they wish.

Whilst the safety situation today on Swinley Drive is far from desirable, the situation will become intolerable should Ridgeway Farm be approved due to the massive increase on the number of vehicles using the road and the extension of the ‘straight part’ allowing speeds to get much higher before reaching the dangerous blind bends.

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Ridgeway Farm will significantly increase ‘rat run’ traffic through West Swindon’s residential areas

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The route a driver takes when heading south on Swinley Drive will be as follows:

248 At the end of Swinley Drive there are three options available (Appendix 3, Map 3):

1. Turn left onto Peatmoor Way and continue to join Mead Way
2. Turn left onto Peatmoor Way and then right onto Roughmoor Way until the Cartwright Drive Roundabout

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¹³ 30 mph flashing speed detection signs have been erected on Swinley Drive

¹⁴ Total houses in Peatmoor and Sparcells = 1069. Houses to the west of Swinley Drive = 450 = 42%. 210 children x 42% = 88

252 3. Head straight across onto Sandacre Road which is a minor residential street until the
Cartwright Drive Roundabout

254 Option one is an unlikely scenario since this means joining Mead Way too early to beat the
queues. Therefore most traffic will reach the roundabout leading into Cartwright Drive via
256 either Roughmoor Way or Sandacre Road. It should be noted that the whole of one side of
Roughmoor Way is filled with parked cars during school run times.

258 On reaching the Cartwright Drive roundabout, there are two options (Appendix 3, Map 4):

- 259 1. Continue on Roughmoor Way until reaching Tewkesbury Way
- 260 2. Head into Cartwright Drive and follow the residential roads until joining Mead Way

262 Option one is unlikely for drivers heading into the town centre since traffic tends to queue
significantly on roundabouts along Tewkesbury Way and at the entrance to Mannington
roundabout (see Appendix 3, Map 5), although if this route is taken, the driver is more likely
264 to head through the Westlea residential area in order to join Mead Way or Great Western
Way. For traffic wishing to reach the M4, they are likely to pass the entrance to Tregozo
266 primary and Lydiard Academy secondary schools.

268 It is predicted a significant majority of additional traffic created by this development will use
Cartwright Drive (Appendix 3, Map 4) as the primary residential road to join Mead Way. This
road passes Brook Field primary school entrance and due to the design of the highway many
270 cars are parked on the road creating obstacles and dangers to motorists and pedestrians
alike. The road is also a bus route and yellow lines have recently been painted in front of the
272 primary school due to actual grid lock problems occurring during school run times. Ironically,
whilst these lines have improved traffic flow, they have also encouraged more drivers to use
274 the road as a 'rat run'.

To approve this housing development would mean:

- **The increased traffic and it's propensity to speed along Swinley Drive will represent an increased risk to the safety of our children**
- **The use of 'rat runs' through residential streets of West Swindon will increase significantly**
- **Cartwright Drive will experience significantly more traffic and dangers to children crossing the road en-route to their primary school will be increased**
- **Traffic on Swinley Drive will increase by somewhere between 156 and 441 vehicles during peak time, the vast majority of which will continue along 'rat runs' creating untold mayhem on West Swindon's residential roads**

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The simple act of buying a newspaper or a takeaway will result in a car journey for nearly all residents of Ridgeway farm

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The theoretical model for walk vs. drive

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Swindon Council's submission to the planning application stated the desirable walking distance to food shops is 300 metres (0.19 miles) with a 600 metre maximum (0.37 miles). It goes on to state the nearest food store from the site is 500 metres (0.31 miles). The following points argue the 500 metre estimate is below reality.

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The walking distance from Peatmoor fish and chip shop to the south side of Sparcells roundabout is 0.56 Km (0.35 miles¹⁵), and to the south side of Swinley Drive roundabout 0.5 Km (0.31 miles). Therefore, allowing for the closest properties on the proposed site to be about 100 m from either of these points, the closest walking distance from any residence within Ridgeway Farm to the Peatmoor Village Centre¹⁶ is 600 Metres, outside the maximum desirable distance and resulting in a 1.2 Km round trip.

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Appendix 5 contains a map created by WSP which shows the walking distance from the sites centre to Peatmoor fish and chip shop is 740 m (in one direction) and, using the scale provided on the map, it can be determined for those living on the peripheries of the development, the same shop would be a further 700 m, giving a maximum walking distance of 1.45 Km (in one direction).

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In summary, the shortest round trip walk would be 1.2 Km and the longest 2.9 Km. Since visits to a small local village centre are about knowing what to buy and not window shopping the length of time at the centre can be measured in minutes. Hence human nature will dictate that if a walk to an activity takes longer than the actual activity, there is a high probability the individual will find a faster mode of transport to make the round trip journey.

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It should also be noted the predicted route on the WSP document from the site to the Casa Paolo restaurant is simply not viable. Even with today's traffic, to walk along this road with no pavement represents a foolish activity.

The theoretical evidence demonstrates ALL residents within Ridgeway Farm will be outside the maximum 600 metre distance from Peatmoor Village centre, thus encouraging the majority of residents to drive to buy something as simple as a pint of milk.

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Factual data on people's real choice of travel

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An SRA survey during April 2012, with 274 responses, asked how many times people had travelled to Peatmoor Village Centre in the previous seven days and what mode of transport was used to get there (Appendix 6).

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The results, graphically depicted in Appendix 6 Map 7, show that both Sparcells and Peatmoor mostly fall within a 0.3 mile radius of the village centre and yet about 50% of residents choose to drive rather than walk. Ridgeway Farm is within the Nine Elms and Shaw radius red zone of 0.6 miles where 73% and 88% respectively choose to use their car.

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¹⁵ Measured using a hand held GPS

¹⁶ Also known as Roughmoor Village Centre

314 Further analysis indicates Common Platt, which is just outside the white zone in Map 7, has
a 65% drive rate and the streets on the northern edge of Peatmoor (Hodds Hill, Horcott
Road, Botley Copse, Letterage Road and Linden Way) have a similar 65% drive rate.

316 This analysis indicates that any resident living in Ridgeway Farm is likely to have between a
318 65% and 88% (76% on average) probability of driving to Peatmoor Village Centre thereby
adding to the congestion of West Swindon's roads even outside of peak times.

320 Since residents in Shaw and Nine Elms have closer alternatives to Peatmoor Village Centre,
the surveys showed 36% of Shaw and 10% of Nine Elms residents never use it. Residents of
322 Ridgeway Farm will have no such alternative within walking distance therefore it is
reasonable to assume that to travel anywhere else, even for those that are normally
predisposed to walk or cycle, they would need to drive.

324 The results from this survey are a best case scenario, since residents were also asked
whether their choice of travel would be influenced by poor weather and after dark hours.
326 The results show 73% of responders are more likely to drive if the weather is bad and 63%
are more likely to drive in the after dark hours. Meaning winter months will see a far higher
328 use of a car vs. other forms of transport.

**The survey data indicates the huge increase this development will have on car use in
West Swindon even outside of peak travel times.**

330 **Peatmoor Village Centre cannot cope with additional traffic**

Current situation

332 Appendix 7, Map 8 provides a view of the village centre which contains a chemist, doctor's
surgery and pub on one side of the car park, with shops, take away food, betting shop,
334 restaurant, hairdressers and preschool crèche on the other. The primary school is at the
north of the site, with Peatmoor Lagoon to the south.

336 The survey previously referenced in Appendix 4 had 304 responding homes resulted in 71%
of people believing parking a car at Peatmoor Village Centre was already problematic at
338 peak times and provides further evidence the centre is already operating at capacity for car
users. Appendix 7, Map 9 provides photographs, taken during April 2012, of poorly parked
340 vehicles as a result of no spaces being available.

342 The design of the car park with facilities on all four sides, results in a great deal of pedestrian
traffic including many young children using the numerous crossing points which are often
obscured by poorly parked vehicles.

344 The car park can be entered from the west and east and the design does not lend itself to
drivers being able to see empty spaces without making a full circuit. Therefore, drivers
346 entering from the east will head for the main 'circle', and complete a full loop in search of a
space. If a space is not found, a further half loop is completed as the driver goes in search of
348 a space near to the crèche. If this is full, there is a potential for the driver to use the small
number of disabled spaces, or head back through the main circle in search of a space in the
350 school or doctors surgery. When none are found, the car is either parked on pavements or
further circuits are completed. A similar activity occurs for drivers entering from the west.
352 Since both sides of the 'circle' are two way, traffic is often held up as drivers park or try to

reverse out of spaces. Vehicles waiting to park or simply exit the car park are often found across crossing points, resulting in many dangers.

Town planners have a dichotomy when deciding how many car parking spaces to provide at a given facility. Too many and people are encourage to drive, too few and inconsiderate or dangerous parking results. The survey detailed in Appendix 4 asked whether residents would be more likely to drive if they knew a car space would be available. 56% stated this would be the case supporting the argument that such facilities are best placed centrally to a development, with restricted parking and shorter travel distances in order to encourage walking. Geographically this obvious planning guideline would be thrown completely out of kilter if Ridgeway Farm was added to the catchment area of Peatmoor Village Centre.

Peatmoor Village Centre car park is already operating at capacity during peak times and was not designed to cope with the volume of traffic Ridgeway Farm would bring

Impact from Ridgeway Farm on Peatmoor Village Centre

The data from the travel survey in Appendix 6 shows that 71% of journeys to Peatmoor Village centre are from Peatmoor and Sparcells residents.

Peatmoor and Sparcells have 1075 homes and given that the village centre will be the closest facility for all Ridgeway Farm residents, it is reasonable to assume their number of visits per week will be similar to that of Peatmoor and Sparcells. With 700 homes this will mean a 65%¹⁷ increase in visits over those of Peatmoor and Sparcells and an overall increase of visits to Peatmoor Village Centre of 46%¹⁸.

As demonstrated on page 12 there will be a 76% probability that these increased visits from Ridgeway Farm will be by car and so car traffic in and out of the centre will increase by a catastrophic 59%¹⁹.

The 91 (including disabled) car parking spaces at the village centre are already inadequate during peak hours resulting in dangerously parked vehicles on pedestrian crossings, primary school and crèche entrances. A 46% increase in numbers of people visiting and 59% increase in road traffic will result in grid lock and significant dangers to pedestrian and drivers alike.

It should be noted that the Mouldon View development of 200 houses will itself result in an increase in visits to Peatmoor Village Centre which can be estimated to be about 15% and an increase in car journeys of about 20%.

The centre acts as a rat run for north bound traffic taking a short cut between Swinley Drive and Mead way (and visa versa), an occurrence that is predicted to increase should Purton Road close (Appendix 5, Map 6). During the morning peak periods and during school run times some drivers, desperate to shorten their commute time, drive as fast as the raised

¹⁷ 700 homes at Ridgeway Farm / 1075 homes in Peatmoor and Sparcells combined = 65% ((700/1075) x100)

¹⁸ For every 1000 visits today, 710 come from Peatmoor and Sparcells (71%). If Ridgeway Farm represents a 65% increase over Peatmoor and Sparcells visits combined, it will generate 0.65 x 710 = 461 more visits. The 1000 visits today is now 1461 representing an increase of 46% ((461 / 1000) x 100)

¹⁹ The survey in Appendix 6 shows of all visits to the centre today 58.7% are driven (587 in every 1000). If Ridgeway Farm creates an additional 461 visits on top of every 1000 made today and 76% of those are driven it results in 346 additional car journeys. The total car journeys was 587 and 346 have now been added by Ridgeway Farm making a 59% increase in car journeys ((346/587) x 100).

386 crossings points will allow them. The increased dangers this additional traffic would
388 represent to children in particular whilst they walk to school are quite frightening and
tragically may even encourage parents who currently encourage their children to walk to
start driving instead.

390

To approve Ridgeway Farm would see a 59% rise in vehicles driving to the centre and result in a catastrophic break down in the ability for traffic to operate safely, creating intolerable risks of injury or worse to all visitors

Rat run traffic through Peatmoor Village Centre during the morning peak period would increase due to the closure of Purton Road. The propensity for many drivers to speed will result in considerably increased dangers to children in particular as they make their way to the primary school or exit their parents' cars en-route to the crèche.

392 **Schools placements and the medium term impact on existing schools and school run**
393 **traffic**

394 It is understood that a primary school would have to be completed within 18 months of
commencement of development. Obviously the school will then need to be resourced by
396 Wiltshire Council. Assuming a perceived best case scenario, and the school opens for
business within 6 months of completion, about 170 new homes would have been
398 completed.

Since every home generates 0.23 primary school places, there would be about 40 children
400 from Ridgeway Farm already attending neighbouring schools such as Peatmoor. This school
suffers with the normal parking problems during the school run hours, much of which
402 occurs in and around the Peatmoor Village Centre. Given the distance parents would have
to travel to this school it is reasonable to assume that these extra children will contribute to
404 an even worse traffic situation during these periods. It is also reasonable to assume the
parents of these children will want future siblings to attend the same school, placing more
406 strain on Swindon facilities and potentially displacing children from existing residents into
2nd or 3rd choice schools, thereby adding even more to volumes of traffic.

To approve the Ridgeway Farm Development would create many years of increased school run traffic during a period when construction vehicle disruption and the dangers it brings will be at its peak.

408

Additional concerns

410 The community also raised concerns about the affect congestion on West Swindon's roads
in having on businesses and the impact of flooding in the area. These issues are documented
412 in Appendix 8.

414 **Conclusion**

416 There is considerable public opposition to this development, opposition that is fraught with
417 frustration with the democracy we find ourselves in today. On smaller scale issues such as
418 street lighting and litter, residents often feel their elected officials aren't representing the
419 public interest. Yet when it comes to an issue where both residents and all elected
420 representatives are singing from the same song book, just one commercially minded party
421 may be seen to be enforcing its will on the people.

422 At times like these two non-sensible arguments against the community tend to be used.
423 Neither standing up to logically scrutiny:

424 First, it might be said that all of West Swindon was once open fields so how can people living
425 in such an area complain. Originally Swine Down (Swindon) was once only a (pig) farm and
426 so to take such an argument to a logical conclusion would mean no-one living anywhere in
427 Swindon can complain about yet more of the countryside being bulldozed.

428 Secondly, the phrase NIMBY is often used against such opposition. Again logical scrutiny
429 leads us to an illogical place. Of course it will be local people, those that will be affected the
430 most, complaining about any un-wanted development. For example, there may be a
431 development proposal elsewhere in the UK that, once aware of all the facts, any right
432 minded individual would be ready to oppose. However, this does not happen since logically
433 everyone cannot be aware of development proposals right across the UK and even if they
434 were; there are very few people ready to engage their life into perpetual activism.

435 However, it should be noted the SRA mandate shows just over 43% comes from areas not
436 directly adjacent to the development.

437 The residents who sent emails to the SRA against the development are normal people who
438 endure the congestion on West Swindon's roads on a daily basis. Opening the community
439 emails provided with this paper at any page, will not indicate the majority of people are
440 upset about bulldozing of countryside or destruction of views. Instead it will show the
441 majority of people, given the already serious problems with West Swindon's existing road
442 infrastructure, are simply incredulous that such an application could even be considered let
443 alone receive the attention of a public enquiry.

444 The term 'sustainable development' has purposely been avoided up until now, since its
445 definition is far from clear. If we take the definition to mean "add to growth in the economy
446 whilst not negatively impacting the quality of life for the majority of people in and around
447 the development area", we can clearly show this development proposal will be contrary to
448 both principles defined in this sentence since, poor travel infrastructure leads to both lower
449 productivity and a poorer quality of life for existing and future generations.

450 West Swindon's travel infrastructure is teetering on the brink and will get worse as
451 developments already approved come on line and other strategically planned developments
452 are completed. To approve a maverick development outside of any rational planning
453 mandate would tip it over the edge.

The Shaw Residents' Association, representing a significant proportion of the local community believes that to approve this development would:

- 1. Be un-democratic**
- 2. Be to intentionally ignore the impact on West Swindon's already over capacity arterial road infrastructure**
- 3. Cause even more misery for commuters and residents during peak travel times**
- 4. Destroy the quality of life for many thousands of people both now and in the future**
- 5. Create peak time grid lock and serious dangers to pedestrians and drivers alike at Peatmoor Village Centre and residential roads such as Swinley and Cartwright Drive**

The SRA therefore believes that approval of the development would be against the public interest and respectfully asks the inspector to reject it.

Appendix 1: Residents opposition to the development

456 Detailed in the table below is a summary of the quantity of emails received by the SRA
 457 providing the association the mandate to speak on behalf of residents. All emails are
 458 available in a separate file together with a file providing the full names and addresses of
 respondents.

Emails of Support Received by the SRA					Planning Objection Addresses NOT Sending an Email
Estate	% of Total	Number of People Responded	Number of Emails Received	Number of Homes Responded	
Sparcells, Peatmoor, Common Platt	56.8%	772	378	368	58
Other West Swindon	36.2%	511	241	244	Not checked
Outside West Swindon	6.9%	63	46	48	Not checked
Total		1346	665	660	

460 Over 1000 residents entered objections to the original planning application. Where those
 461 objections include a full address and are within Sparcells, Peatmoor and Common Platt, the
 462 homes that objected to the planning application, but have not sent an email of support to
 464 the SRA have been included in the above table.

[RB.dcc.KF1320](#)

Dear Mr Fisher,

Thank you for your email of 21st April on behalf of Shaw Residents asking about the Council's policy towards the proposed Ridgeway Farm development in Wiltshire. The short answer is that Swindon Borough Council is opposed to it, largely for the reasons you have stated.

All three of your current ward councillors are members of Cabinet and so I have left them to lead the whole Borough's oppositions to the plans. We have been working very closely with our colleagues in Wiltshire Unitary Authority to make them aware of why we think the Ridgeway Farm development is unsuitable and I believe our arguments have been heard.

Furthermore, our officers have been cooperating with their opposite numbers in Wiltshire to ensure that they have any data necessary from Swindon in order to argue against the plans. We are authorising our officers to continue assisting Wiltshire in opposing the appeal.

I hope that assures you about the Council's position concerning Ridgeway Farm. Please do not hesitate to contact me about any other matters of Council policy in which you or your fellow residents are interested.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Roderick Bluh
Leader of the Council

Cllr. Stan Pajak
Swindon Council Group Leader
165 Drove Road
Swindon
SN1 3AQ



25th April 2012

Dear Sir

Proposed Development at Ridgeway Farm

The Lib Dem group on Swindon council are united in supporting the Shaw Residents Association opposition to the proposed development at Ridgeway Farm.

In simple terms the application is not wanted, not needed, not supported and will cause a dramatic lowering in the quality of life for residents who live nearby. The size of the development is eye watering being twice the size of Sparcells.

The coalition government if nothing else has declared itself to be responsive to resident's wishes. The application is opposed by all the elected bodies of the area and is outside both Swindon council's and Wiltshire County council strategic housing plans and clearly the decision on this controversial matter must reflect this.

I therefore hope that this application can be refused and lift the dark cloud that besets the residents of this area while they wait for a decision.

Yours faithfully

Cllr. Stan Pajak

Dear Kevin

I would like to inform you of the Swindon Labour Group's opposition to the proposed Ridgeway Farm development. We are against this development firstly because we do not believe the land proposed for development is sustainable, with the residents of the proposed housing development relying on facilities outside of the immediate area, which will result in increased traffic congestion.

We secondly oppose this development because the people who will be living in this proposed development will be using Swindon's infrastructure but paying council tax to Wiltshire Council. To the Labour Group this seems completely unfair, particularly when Swindon is already struggling to cope with increased demands on its infrastructure from developments within its borders.

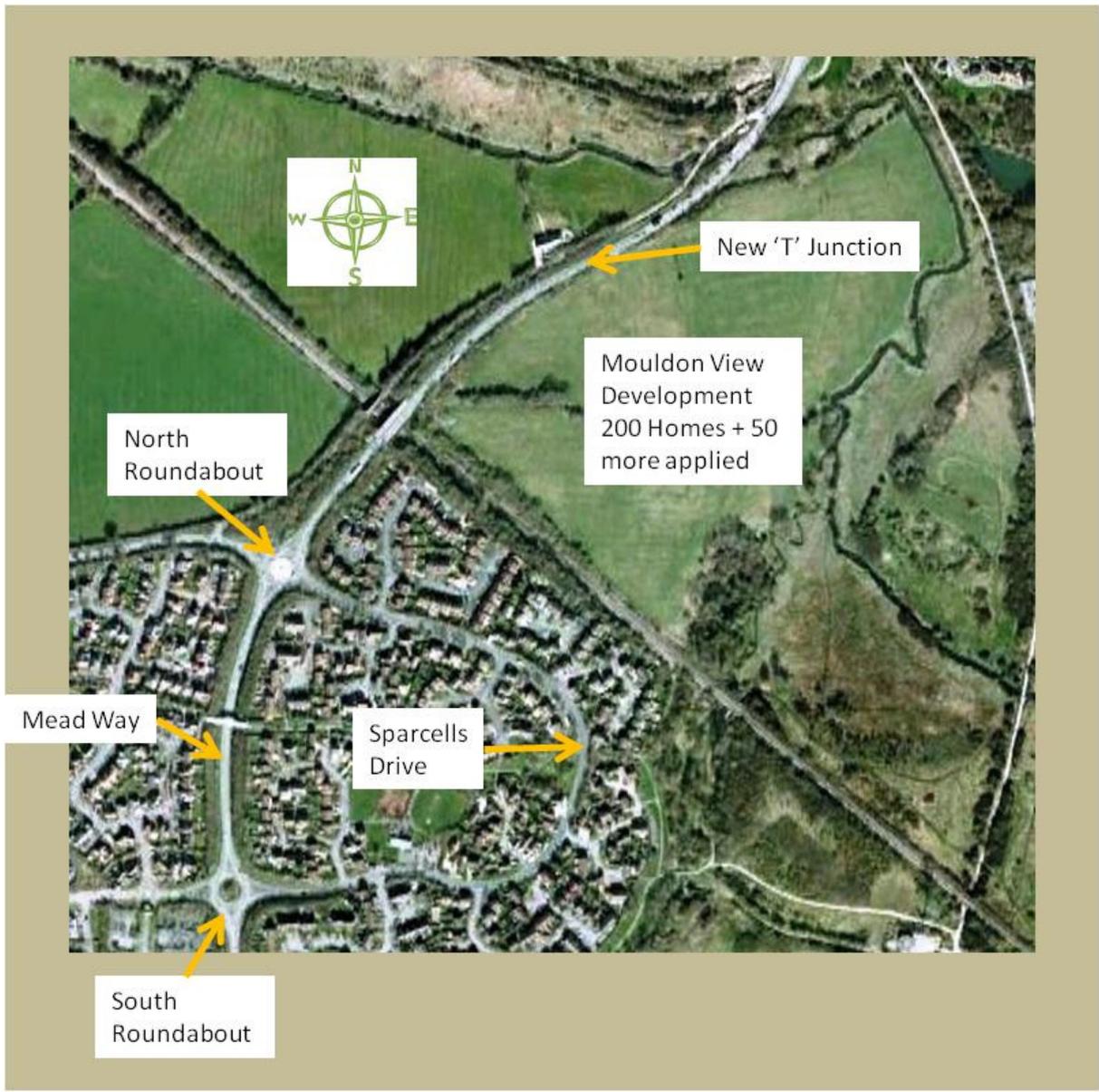
I sincerely hope that the local opposition to this development will mean that this proposed Ridgeway Farm development will be rejected on appeal.

Kind Regards

Cllr Jim Grant
Swindon Labour Group Leader

480

Appendix 3: Maps showing West Swindon road infrastructure, likely routes of 'rat run' traffic from Ridgeway Farm and current congestion on Mead Way



482

Appendix 3, Map 1: Sparcells Drive and the Moulton View development – Highlighting the 'T' junction location from the new development

486

Note: All maps source Google™ Earth

488

Mead Way Congestion May 2012



490 **Appendix 3, Picture 1: Mead Way Congestion**

492

494



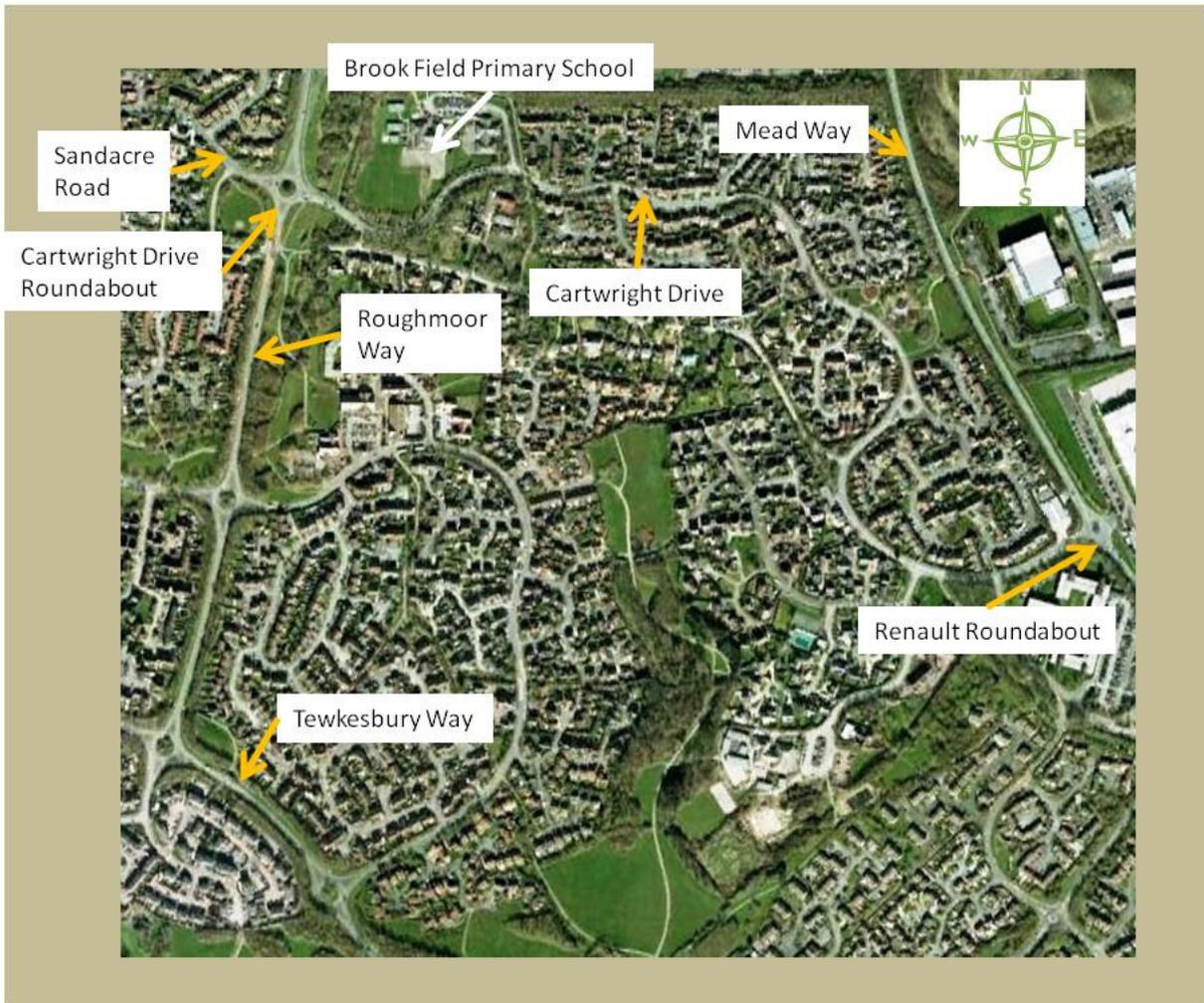
496 **Appendix 3, Map 2: Swinley Drive and Peatmoor Village Centre – Highlighting the location**
498 **of Peatmoor Primary School, the numbers of homes on the opposite side of Swinley Drive**
to the school and the winding residential nature of Swinley Drive



500

502

Appendix 3, Map 3: Traffic Options When Exiting Swinley Drive – Highlighting two primary schools and the learner driver test centre

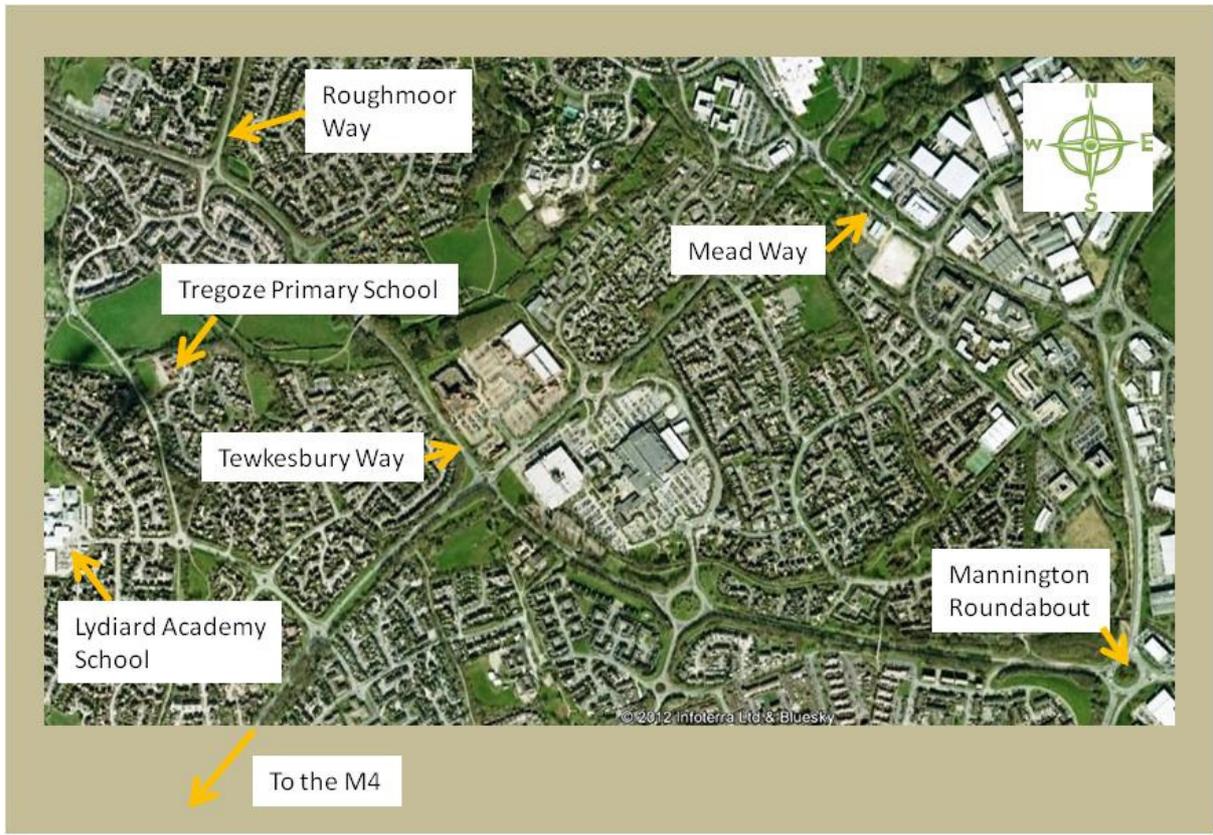


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Appendix 3, Map 4: Traffic Options When Reaching Cartwright Drive Roundabout – Highlighting the location of the primary school and the Renault Roundabout access to Mead Way



Appendix 3, Map 5: Traffic Options When Reaching Tewkesbury Way – Highlighting M4 traffic likely to use residential roads past a primary and secondary school

Appendix 4: Travel Survey #1 – Cars on road during peak times and Peatmoor Village Centre parking issues

512

The survey

514

During April 2012, an email survey was sent to local residents asking the following questions

516

1. Name the estate in which you live:

518

2. How many cars are owned by your household?

520

3. On average, how many of those cars are used during peak traffic periods?

522

4. Please answer this statement with the words "true" if you agree with it, "false" if you do not, or "never" if you do not use Peatmoor Village centre

524

"I do not drive to Peatmoor Village centre during peak times because I know parking will be problematic"

526

5. Please answer this statement with the words "true" if you agree with it, "false" if you do not, or "never" if you do not use Peatmoor Village centre

528

"If I was certain of finding a car parking space at Peatmoor village centre, I would be more likely to drive rather than walk or cycle"

528

The Results

Survey of Cars per Home on the Road At Peak Times and Parking Behaviours													
	Number of Responses (Homes)	Number of Cars	Number Cars on Road at Peak Time	Statement #1			Statement #2			Cars Per Home	Average Cars per Home on Road at Peak Times	% People Believe Parking at Peatmoor Centre Problematic	% People More Likely to Drive if Parking Aasy
				TRUE	FALSE	Never go there	TRUE	FALSE	Never go there				
Sparcells	54	101	75	35	18	1	23	30	1	1.87	1.39	66.0%	43.4%
Peatmoor	113	214	147	81	29	3	59	51	3	1.89	1.30	73.6%	53.6%
Common Platt	14	29	22	10	4	0	9	5	0	2.07	1.57	71.4%	64.3%
Nine Elms	42	81	50	23	11	8	17	17	8	1.93	1.19	67.6%	50.0%
Shaw	59	98	64	36	10	13	34	12	13	1.66	1.08	78.3%	73.9%
Non West Swindon	14	28	18	6	5	3	7	4	3	2.00	1.29	54.5%	63.6%
Other West Swindon	8	15	8	5	1	2	4	2	2	1.88	1.00	83.3%	66.7%
Total	304	566	384	196	78	30	153	121	30	1.90	1.26	71.5%	55.8%

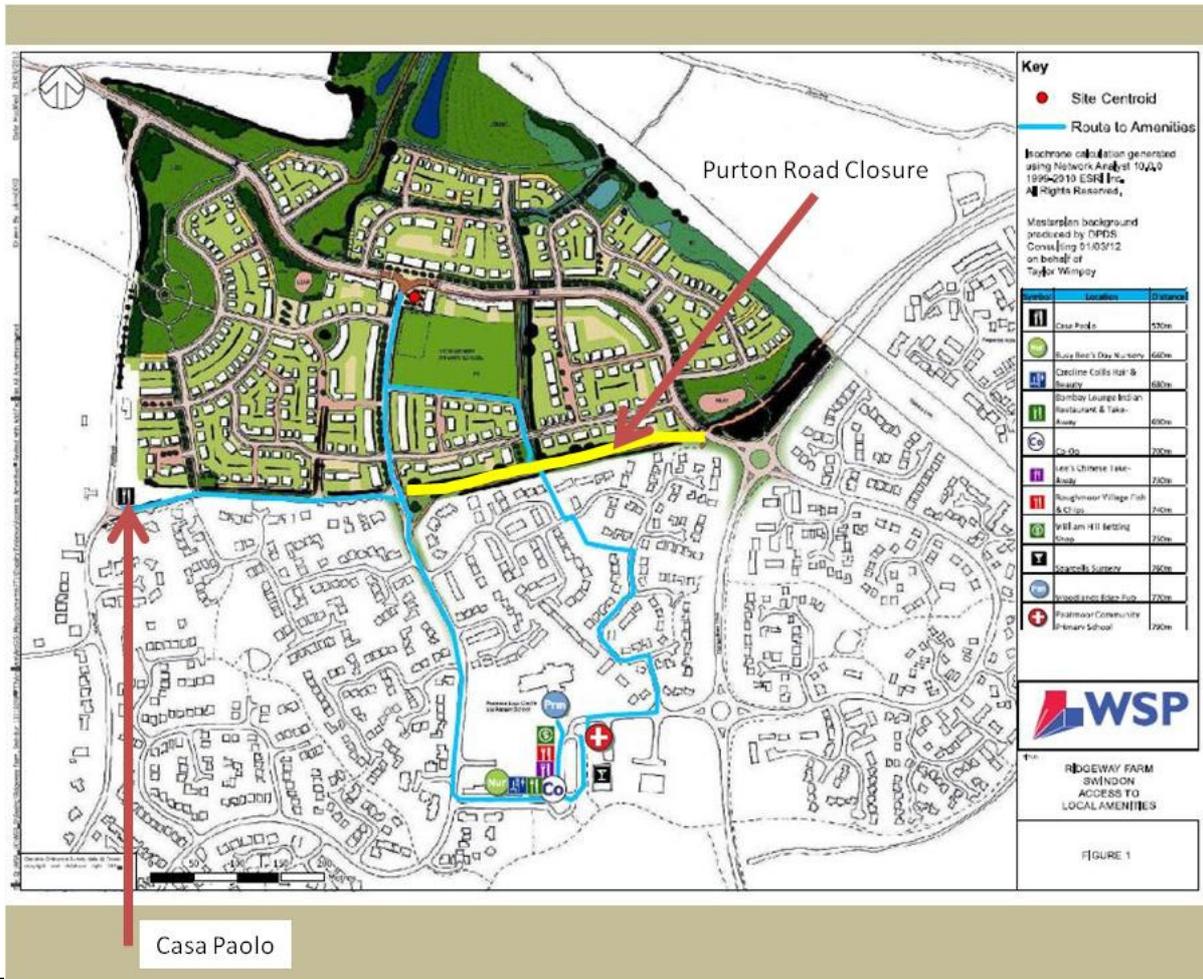
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Statement #1: "I do not drive to Peatmoor Village centre during peak times because I know parking will be problematic"

532

Statement #2: "If I was certain of finding a car parking space at Peatmoor village centre, I would be more likely to drive rather than walk or cycle"

534



Appendix 5, Map 6: Walking Distances – Highlighting the Purton Road closure and Casa Paolo restaurant

Appendix 6: Survey of Modes of transport used for Journeys to Peatmoor Village Centre

540 The survey

During April 2012, an email survey was sent to local residents asking the following questions

542

1. Name the street in which you live:

544

2. Have you used any of the facilities (shops, restaurants, take away, betting shop, nursery, primary school, community facilities, pub etc) at Peatmoor Village centre in the last month?

546

Yes:

No:

548

If the answer is no you have completed the questionnaire.

3. How often have you travelled there in the last seven days?

550

4. If the answer is less than one, how many times in the last month?

5. Of these journeys, how many were for the school run?

552

6. Of those journeys how many times did you get there by

Driving:

554

Walking:

Cycling:

556

Using public transport:

7. Are you more likely to drive if the weather is bad (e.g. raining)

558

Yes:

No:

560

Maybe (please explain):

8. Are you more likely to drive during after dark hours?

562

Yes:

No:

564

Maybe (please explain):

566 The Results

Mode of Transport to Peatmoor Village Centre							
	% Drive	% Walk	% Cycle	% Public Transport	Responses	Total Visits	Visits per home per week
Sparcells	49.8%	45.2%	5.0%	0.0%	51	221	4.3
Peatmoor	52.4%	45.0%	2.5%	0.0%	114	555	4.9
Shaw	88.1%	10.8%	1.1%	0.0%	39	88.25	2.3
Nine Elms	72.8%	26.5%	0.8%	0.0%	41	131.25	3.2
Common Platt	65.1%	28.6%	6.3%	0.0%	16	63	3.9
Others	81.0%	19.0%	0.0%	0.0%	13	26.25	2.0
Total	58.7%	38.5%	2.9%	0.0%	274	1084.75	3.4

568

North Peatmoor Streets					
	Journeys	drive	walk	cycle	public
Hodds Hill	33	19	14	0	0
Horcott Road	40	28	11	1	0
Botley Copse	0	0	0	0	0
Letterage Road	10	7	3	0	0
Linden Way	19	12	6	1	0
Total	102	66	34	2	0
Percentage		64.7%	33.3%	2.0%	0.0%

570

Impact of Weather & Winter Nights on Probability to Drive						
	Bad Weather		After Dark		Never Use	
	Quantity Stating More Likely to Drive	% Probability Would Drive	Quantity Stating More Likely to Drive	% Probability Would Drive	Quantity Stating Never Use Centre	% Never Use
Sparcells	39	76.5%	31	60.8%	1	2.0%
Peatmoor	94	82.5%	80	70.2%	0	0.0%
Shaw	27	69.2%	23	59.0%	14	35.9%
Nine Elms	30	73.2%	29	70.7%	4	9.8%
Common Platt	11	68.8%	9	56.3%	0	0.0%
Others	9	69.2%	7	53.8%	2	15.4%
Total	201	73.4%	172	62.8%	19	6.9%

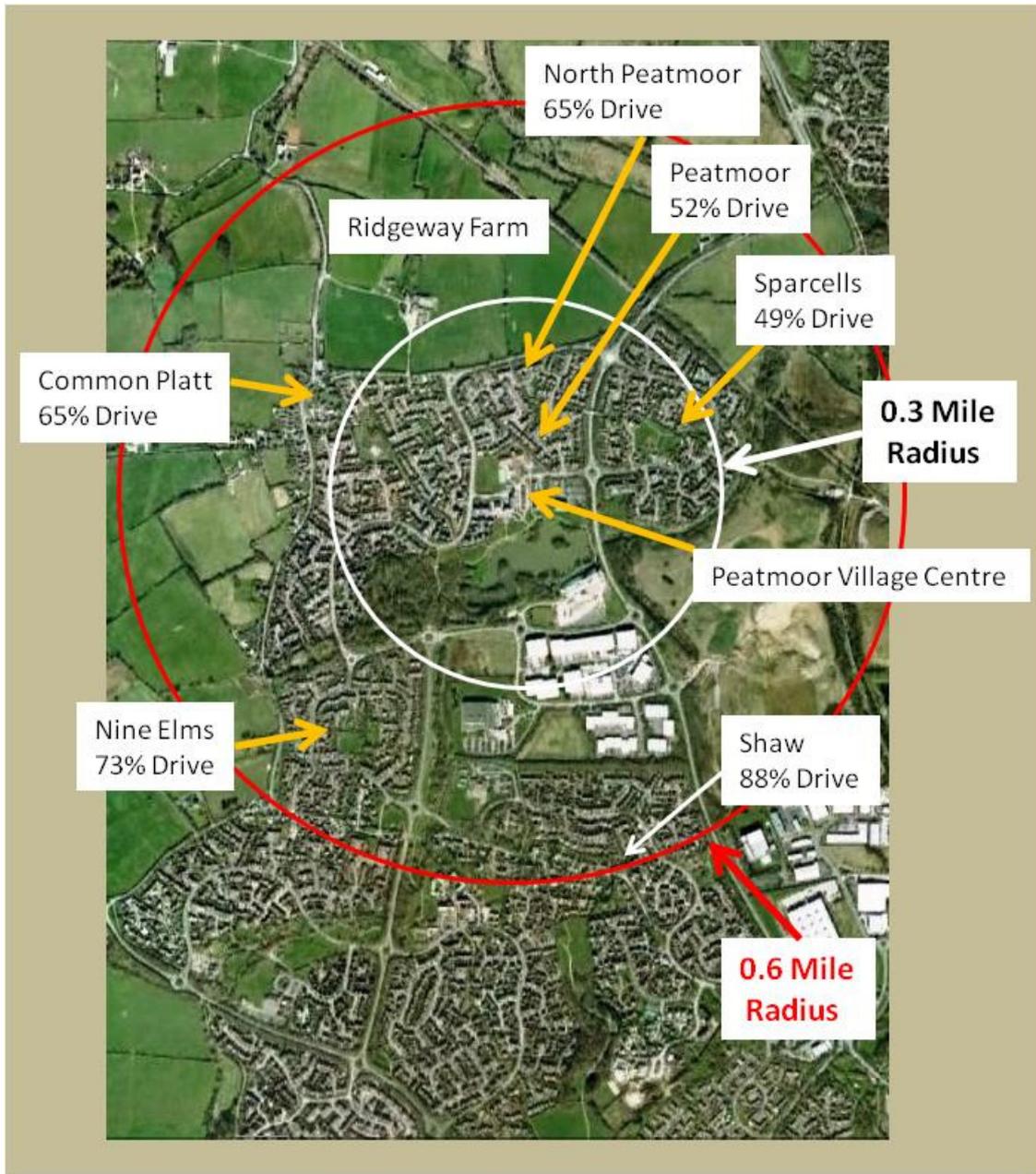
Visit Split Between Sparcells/Peatmoor and the Rest				
	Number of responses	Visits Per week	visits per household per week	Visits per estate
Sparcells	51	221	4.3	71.5%
Peatmoor	114	555	4.9	
Shaw	39	88.25	2.3	
Nine Elms	41	131.25	3.2	26.0%
Common Platt	16	63	3.9	
Others	13	26.25	2.0	2.4%
Total	274	1085		

572

574

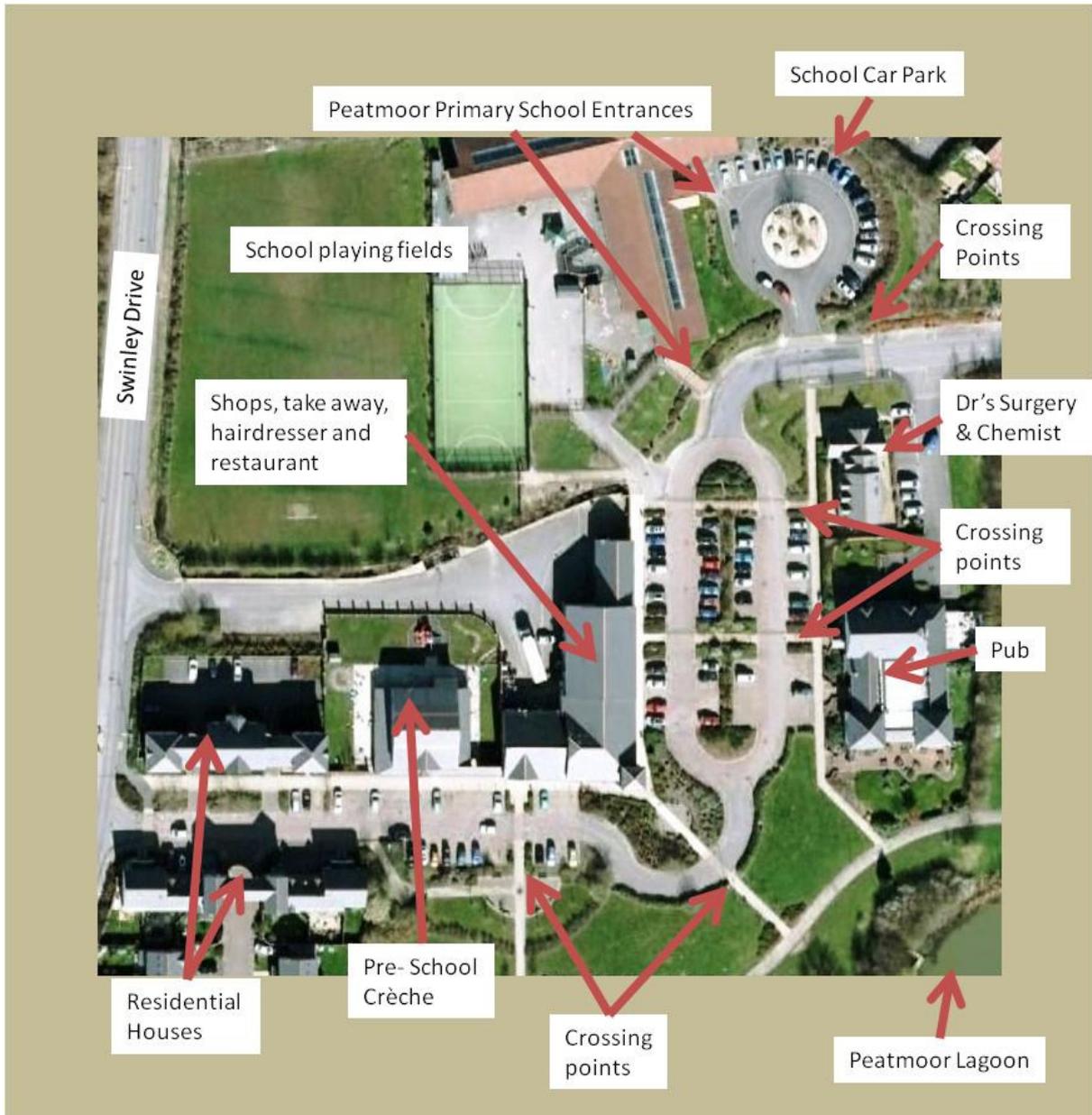
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Appendix 6, Map 7: Percentage of residents who choose to drive to Peatmoor Village Centre within a radius of 0.3 and 0.6 miles – Highlighting residents along the border of Ridgeway Farm drive on average 65% of the time

Appendix 7: Peatmoor village Centre map



Appendix 7, Map 8: Peatmoor village Centre – Highlighting location of school and crèche entrances, numerous crossing points, car park 'circle' and location of facilities



586

588

Appendix 7, Map 9: Poorly parked vehicles in Peatmoor Village Centre providing evidence parking is already beyond capacity at this site. Photos taken during April 2012

590 **Appendix 8: Additional concerns**

592 **The affect poor traffic flow is having on local businesses and local employment**

594 West Swindon appears awash with empty industrial / warehouse facilities. In Hillmead alone
596 (and there are four other business centres along the Mead Way corridor – Basepoint,
598 Westlea, Westmead and Delta), I was able to calculate from lease signs alone 80,000ft² of
600 empty commercial space available to lease or buy. Additionally there is a further 7 acres of
602 business land for sale within the same area.

604 Obviously the recession has much to explain for this problem. However, delays in transport
606 are often cited by central government as an inhibitor to productivity. It therefore seems
608 reasonable to assume that further congestion on West Swindon’s road will lead to reduced
probabilities that these sites will ever be filled and therefore paradoxically lead to even
more cars commuting on West Swindon roads to places of employment outside of the
region.

604

Flooding

606 The required experts may well have made assurances that this development will not cause
608 additional flooding problems. However, the pictures on the next page show the levels flood
water reached on the 30th April 2012.

In 2007 heavy rain caused the River Ray to bust its banks and flood across Purton Road bringing the whole of West Swindon to grid lock. Residents reported taking over four hours to get home (from the town centre), many abandoning their cars. The photo's below were taken on 30th April 2012



Above: River just a foot or two from flooding Purton Road



Above and below: View of the river taken from the driveway of one of the new homes in Mouldon view. The River has clearly burst its banks and is just a few feet from flooding the new properties



610