

## SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL CENTRAL PLANNING COMMITTEE - 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2016

### AGENDA ITEM 5 - Planning Application 16/02752/EIA

#### Proposed Poultry Units South of The Vinnals, Lower Common, Longden, Shropshire.

Construction of two poultry sheds and feed bins, ancillary works, access improvements, erection of biomass building and associated landscaping.

#### **Statement by Zia Robins on behalf of the British Horse Society and the Nesscliffe Hills & District Bridleway Association.**

Our concerns, and the concerns of many, over the considerable impact of this proposed development on both the enjoyment and safety of users of the public bridleway, the importance of the recreational and tourism value of the Shropshire Council promoted routes there, the impact on non-motorised users and residents on the local connecting country lanes, and the impact on these narrow lanes and the countryside, have not been adequately addressed.

The Vinnals Bridleway 4A forms part of the **Humphrey Kynaston Circular Lyth Hill Route**, linking to the Humphrey Kynaston Way long distance bridleway from Church Stretton, via Nesscliffe to Grinshill. This is a Natural England funded 'Paths for Communities' Project, created with the help of volunteers, and supported by Shropshire Council, to connect rural communities and support tourism. It is a valued route much used by the many local riders, whose day to day spending supports the local rural economy. It is also an important part of the Shropshire Council's promoted flagship long distance walking route, the **Shropshire Way**, a big draw for tourists. Both routes support local B & B's, holiday lets, country pubs etc, and equestrian businesses, and help to boost one of Shropshire's main sources of income, Tourism. It is acknowledged in the planning papers that the poultry shed proposal will only provide one job. It could impact on many.

The Vinnals Bridleway has wonderful views across the proposed Poultry shed site to the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and there are views to the site from some distance to the south. This large proposed poultry unit, the smells from it, and all the traffic to and from it and the biomass boiler, will impact on user's enjoyment and safe use of this bridleway. The acknowledged ammonia emissions and other emissions could impact on user's health, as the bridleway passes very close to the proposed sheds This has not been addressed. What will happen if there are bio security concerns, with the bridleway so close? **This is the only possible off road route open to horse riders to link to routes to the south from the Lyth Hill Countryside site and the surrounding area.**

Shropshire Council has a duty of care to all users of Public Highways, which include Public Bridleways. **The proposed mitigation of providing 2 small passing places 'for pedestrians' on the long length of bridleway to be used by up to 6 axle, 44 tones HGV's, will do nothing to improve horse rider's safety.** Horses feel trapped when confined in a small space with a huge vehicle passing close by. **Landscaping and signing will not mitigate the above concerns.**

Horse riders do have to contend with farm traffic, but **this is no justification for adding to this** by granting an Industrial type factory business, which will put Heavy Goods Vehicles regularly onto a public bridleway. Local lanes are already signed as 'Unsuitable for Heavy Good Vehicles'; bridleways are even more unsuitable for them.

The proposed mitigation of the previous **recommendation to refuse** this Application is to take the chickens out in daytime. This will not only impact on the welfare of the chickens, who are normally caught at night to minimise stress and injury, which could be a welfare issue, but it will also impact

further on this important horse riding and tourism route with not even weekend respite from HGV's, as chicken farms operate everyday.

The Addendum to the Environmental Statement states that **Cargills are not likely to offer a contract with the night time restriction**, but after 'talks' with other operators **they have only 'indicated'** they would be **'interested in offering a contract'**. This is not good enough as **there is no guarantee that this will happen**. If planning permission is granted, and they later find that they cannot comply, will they then be required to pull the sheds down, or just be allowed to revert back to night time clearance?

If two sheds are granted, what will Shropshire Council do when they apply to add more chicken sheds? Will they just grant them as they have done elsewhere in Shropshire, greatly increasing the volume of traffic? The Biomass boiler has capacity for far more than two and possibly up to 9 sheds, Why? Why has bunding been omitted on the east side; is this to allow for future expansion?

**This site is totally unsuitable for a large chicken farm as there is no good access route to the main highway network.** The quiet narrow lanes to the west to Longden, and then all the way back east to the A49, proposed as the revised HGV route to the site are important to local walkers, and horse riders, who have to use these lanes to link routes, and to access the Bridleway by Westley Farm. How will vehicles pass on the narrow section from Exfords Green to the A49? There is no mitigation there. If traffic builds up when large vehicles meet, this will impact on the safety of non-motorised users, and could impact on the A49 at Hungerhill. What happens if the A49 is closed due to an accident? Due to height and weight restrictions etc. there is no other route out from the proposed site. There are strict time limits for transporting chickens.

Rather than go the 5 miles from the A49 to Longden to the west and then back on Long Lane to access the site, it is more likely that vehicles will take a short cut down even narrower lanes. It has been admitted that it will be difficult to Police the 106 routeing agreement.

**This development may create one job, but will impact on many, and will incur considerable costs to Shropshire Council for the constant repair of the narrow lanes, as evidenced elsewhere. It will put non motorised users of the local public highways and public bridleway at risk.**

**This Application is against Shropshire Council's stated aim in its adopted Countryside Access Strategy for Shropshire 2008-2018. - Developing the positive benefits that walking riding and cycling can bring to our lives, the benefits of exercise in the countryside to people's health and contribution made by walking, riding and cycling to Shropshire's tourism economy. (see below)**

**It is also against Shropshire's Core Strategy CS5, CS6 & CS16 (see below) and other adopted Council Policies.**

**We ask that this application be refused.**

### **POLICY DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO ABOVE**

The Countryside Access Strategy for Shropshire 2008-2018 document states P58. **All developments and initiatives should be appropriate in scale and complementary in character to existing facilities and environment within the county. Due regard should be made to ensure that the quality of the environment is respected and protected.** Also P61 **'to provide a high quality access network that supports a thriving sustainable tourism economy'** **'The significant economic benefits to local communities and opportunities for this market to expand...ways can be found to encourage more of these activities (walking, horse riding and cycling) whilst minimising overall**

**transport, traffic on rural roads and impacts on biodiversity and heritage.** This Planning Application is contrary to these aims.

**Shropshire Tourism Strategy 2004, quoted in the above document, revealed that the main appeal of Shropshire is in the unspoilt landscape and peaceful, relaxing ambience of the area.**

### **SHROPSHIRE'S CORE STRATEGY :-**

**CS5 indicates that new development will be strictly controlled in accordance with national planning policies protecting the countryside.**

**CS16 - states that emphasis will be placed on promoting connections between visitors and Shropshire's natural, cultural, and historic environment including through active recreation, and supporting schemes which 'do not harm Shropshire's tranquil nature', and**

**CS17 includes ensuring that all development protects and enhances the high quality and local character of Shropshire's natural and historic environment, and does not adversely affect the recreational values of these assets.**

### **PLANNING APPEAL DECISION**

**APP/L3245/W/15/3106043 - For two dwellings and associated access and curtilage on Land adjacent to Clifton Coach House, Ford, Shrewsbury.**

**Below are some of the important points made by the Inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, in dismissing a Planning Appeal, with relevant reference numbers. The Inspector referred to the impact on a public bridleway, and quoted Planning Policies as below. Many of the points made are relevant to this proposal.**

The proposed vehicular access to the planning site was up Bridleway 7 in Ford Parish

**10. CS Policy CS5 indicates that new development will be strictly controlled in accordance with national planning policies protecting the countryside. ....**

**CS Policy CS6 indicates that the creation of sustainable places will be achieved by, amongst other things, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment; and, requiring proposals likely to generate significant levels of traffic to be located in accessible locations where the need for car based travel is reduced.**

**CS 17 also seeks to protect and enhance the local character of Shropshire's natural and historic environment.**

**11. The Framework indicates that planning should, amongst other things, recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.....Nonetheless, the greenfield proposal, which would involve the development of agricultural land, would encroach on the open countryside. It is likely that the proposed buildings would curtail views of the countryside to the south which can currently be enjoyed from the section of the bridleway adjacent to the site. Furthermore, they would be visible over a significant section of the bridleway when approaching the site.....This would be reinforced by the frequent comings and goings of vehicular traffic along the bridleway..... Existing users of the bridleway, such as walkers and riders, are likely to be particularly appreciative of the existing rural character of the approach to the village, which would be diminished by the appeal scheme. The proposal would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the appeal site surroundings.**

17. I consider on balance, that the scheme would cause significant environmental harm, due to its impact on the character and appearance of the appeal site, surroundings, and in this respect it would conflict with CS Policies CS6, CS17 and CS5.

**The appeal was dismissed**