

Report for West Hill Parish Council

July 2021

Cllr Jess Bailey, Devon County Council and East Devon District Council

Straitgate Quarry

EDDC, in its capacity as consultee on the Straitgate Quarry application has submitted an objection to Devon County Council. As the EDDC West Hill ward member I participated in the delegated planning meeting on 30th June and supported the proposed position taken by EDDC. The objection arises from the concern that EDDC has in respect of the updated transport assessment submitted by Aggregate Industries.

EDDC feel that this does not adequately address the issue of increased cattle crossings which will be caused by the loss of cattle grazing land north of the B3174. EDDC believe that these crossings will have a “significant adverse impact on the free flow of traffic into and out of Ottery St Mary, to the detriment of the economy, environment and the wellbeing of the area and its inhabitants, as well as the safety of road users”. EDDC have made it very clear that although they had recently granted consent to the crossing in a different location this did not authorise an increase in the volume of crossings (I also objected strongly to this application submitted by Aggregate Industries to EDDC but it was regrettably approved).

I very much support the position taken by EDDC in submitting an objection to DCC. I have serious concerns about the crossings – as well as many other aspects – of this application. This also contains a link to the objection letter submitted by EDDC. [EDDC submits objection to Straitgate Quarry application – Jess Bailey \(home.blog\)](#)

Broadband upgrade

There are in essence three ways in which broadband can potentially be upgraded in West Hill. First, via a commercial roll out from an operator such as Openreach or Jurassic. Second, via the Connecting Devon and Somerset Airband Contract. Third, via a pooling of gigabit vouchers through a scheme such as Openreach’s community fibre partnership.

Commercial Roll Out

Earlier this year we received the disappointing news that Jurassic Fibre were no longer intending to roll out to West Hill, as it was anticipated that Openreach would be doing so. There has in fact been a ‘trickle’ from Openreach and nothing more, with no suggestion that there will be anything further from them until 2024 at the earliest. I am in touch with both Jurassic and Openreach and hope that will be doing my best to persuade them to have a change of heart. There is considerable appetite to upgrade beyond the current fibre to cabinet service, not least because for many of our residents who live considerable distances from the cabinet experience speeds that are extremely poor. It is also possible that other commercial operators may be interested in rolling out to West Hill and this requires further investigation.

Connecting Devon and Somerset – Airband Contract

This contract was placed in December 2019 but I do not believe that West Hill is within a contract area for Airband.

Gigabit Voucher Scheme

I am told by CDS that even though West Hill postcodes are not shown as being eligible for the vouchers that it could potentially qualify if there is no intention of a commercial roll out. This is something that would require further discussion with CDS. The gigabit voucher scheme is designed for rural areas and, looking at the ONS map,, West Hill does meet the rural element criteria [Rural-Urban Classification for Output Areas Locator Tool \(arcgis.com\)](#). I am advised by CDS that a voucher pooling scheme could typically take around 12-18 months and where this has been rolled out in other communities it is usually led by a motivated individual or individuals from the community rather than a parish council itself (but with a parish council or other village group providing support).

It would be helpful to discuss with the Parish Council to find a way forward.

Ash Hill Road

Following the felling of roadside trees earlier this year on a Saturday in the middle of lockdown an area tree preservation order was imposed at my request by an EDDC tree officer. A 5 day notice was submitted recently by the landowner with a view to removing two dead trees, carrying out some deadwooding over the highway, reducing a tree over a driveway and cutting back an oak's branch on safety grounds. This application has been looked at by the tree officers and considered acceptable. Details are on the Parish Council's website.

I have been liaising closely with both the Parish Council and the tree officers with a view to ensuring the continued protection of the trees – not least because this avenue of trees is recognised as a valued view with the adopted neighbourhood plan. The tree officers have advised me that the trees will continue to be protected albeit with the TPO in a refined form after the expiry of the existing temporary order.

B3180 – speed and safety issues

I am liaising with the B3180 Action Group and DCC highways officers on this matter - in particular the extension of the 30mph zone. There has been an ongoing discussion about the need for covert speed data before going to SCARF (speed compliance action review forum) when it is already a site for speed detection officers. I am continuing to press for progress on this long running matter as I recognise that there is a great deal of concern.

Road repairs

Please can the Parish Council advise its thoughts on the following in terms of priority (or if the Parish Council has any other priority areas).

Windmill Lane (overlay or micro-asphalt tbc)

West Hill Road (speed cushions resurfacing)

Eastfield (overlay patching)

Preparation of the Local Plan

The interactive plan showing all the sites that landowners have put forward under the local plan is now live on EDDC's website. [Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment - East Devon](#). There are 17 sites that have been put forward in the Ottery St Mary ward.

Devon County Council as highways and education authority will be consulted as part of this HELAA process whereby the sites are considered before their possible inclusion in the Local Plan. DCC highways department are unable to commit to a particular date to review the sites, so EDDC's approach will be to consider the largest sites first.

As part of the consideration of whether the sites are potentially "achievable", the sites will be looked at by the HELAA panel. EDDC officers advised that "Membership of the Panel is representative of a broad cross section of the housing and economic development sectors, including house builders (volume and smaller scale schemes) social landlords, local property agents, and other related professions, local community representatives and other agencies". I asked for details of details of membership of the Panel but officers were reluctant to provide this information. It is totally unacceptable for the panel to be kept secret and I will continue to press for greater transparency.