



Desborough Town Council
Town Clerk: Graham Thomson
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Marcus Grant
Development Engineer
Midlands Division
Persimmon Homes - Charles Church
3 Waterside Way
Bedford Road
Northampton
NN4 7XD

9 March 2021

Dear Mr Grant,

Temporary Traffic Regulation Order: TTRO(20/21) N522

On behalf of my Council I wish to register the strongest possible protest at the timing and duration of the forthcoming road closure allowed by the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) for the full road closure of the B576 between Glebe Farm and the roundabout at Greening Road and Desborough Road, Rothwell for the period 05/04/2021 to 18/04/2021. It is most unfortunate that the intention to carry out this work now was not communicated to the Town Councils or community representatives in time to allow for appropriate discussion with people who will be directly affected by it and perhaps to influence it.

Following a fully attended extraordinary meeting of Desborough Town Council to which you were invited and at which Councillors from Rothwell Town Council, Kettering Borough Council, and Northamptonshire County Council were also in attendance, I am instructed to demand that the closure arrangements be changed to avoid the tremendous and unnecessary inconvenience to the residents of Desborough, the staff and pupils of Montsaye Academy, and the essential staff and the patients of the Rothwell Medical Centre & Pharmacy.

My Council is relieved that the original diversion route has been corrected and now shows as the approved route for construction traffic. As you know, the development in Rothwell parish at Rothwell North has brought a great deal of construction traffic through Desborough. As we all know, all the construction traffic is required to use the route down the B576 through Desborough and to the Harborough Road junction with the A6 (near Hermitage Road). Self evidently, being entirely within the Rothwell Town Council area, the development will benefit Rothwell and it certainly disadvantages Desborough during the construction phase. This closure, for this length, at this time, is a further sleight on the residents of our town. Over 6,000 vehicles per day use this road and the disruption to those vehicles should not be underestimated. Neither should the disruption that those vehicles will cause. Even if it was accepted that many of those vehicles are passing through and will instead simply bypass Desborough that would still leave a significant number of vehicles using other roads. Many drivers will seek to find shorter or quicker alternative routes which will create rat runs on already difficult roads.

Whilst my Council understands the need for a road closure to allow the development to proceed, there is great concern at the impact of such a lengthy closure and the specific timing of the works. The TTRO permits the complete closure of the only commodious route between the towns of Desborough and Rothwell.

My Council is not unreasonable. It fully accepts that it is necessary for a complete closure to allow the service ducting to be laid and the road surface to be treated. It fully accepts that safety of workers on site, drivers passing by, and pedestrians is and should be the priority (I shall return to this subject later). However my Council cannot understand the timing in relation to the community disruption such a closure will inevitably cause. It cannot accept that the closure need take so long. It seems as if your contractor intends to close the road completely for the entire duration of the TTRO whatever the cost to the local population and regardless of the number of hours per day work will not be carried out.

Whilst the Covid pandemic has had only a minimal impact on the construction and sales on the site (delaying only by a matter of weeks), it is widely known that it has had a catastrophic impact on schools and on front line medical services. As you should know, the site is adjacent to the school and the Rothwell Medical Centre & Pharmacy. A great many pupils, and many patients, not to mention the staff at the school and the surgery travel from Desborough. Disrupting any health service during these times of Covid is entirely regrettable at best and is utterly reckless at worst. To cause the amount of disruption proposed to the school a matter of weeks after it has reopened is simply unacceptable. The number of bus journeys per day which will be disrupted, given that the busses make repeat journeys, will cause disruption and delays to pupils getting into and out of school. The knock-on effect of potential Covid transmission is also worthy of note.

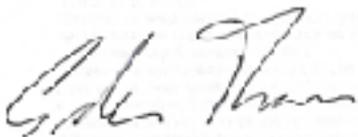
My Council also shares concern for the access / egress arrangements for the new residents of the development. It is quite wrong to treat those people who have already paid you less favourably. There must be suitable, safe, and convenient arrangements for residents of the development to get in and out.

Returning to public safety, it is noted that the you intend to “*keep a safe pedestrian link from Desborough to Rothwell*”. My Council is increasingly concerned at the unsatisfactory arrangements to protect pedestrians during the current phase of works. Simply put, there have been many reports of the protective fencing falling over in the wind and blocking the so called protected path leading to pedestrians having to use the roadway instead. It is imperative that the arrangements for pedestrians are more effective, and more appropriate than those used hitherto.

Finally, it does seem that Persimmons’ balance sheet is given more weight and consideration than the health, education, and lives of the residents of the locality. This cannot be right. My Council therefore demands that:-

1. for any and all future road closures affecting this site, the community be given as much notice as possible, and that Desborough Town Council be notified directly before any TTRO is applied for;
2. the beginning of the TTRO be brought forward by one week to coincide more closely with the school’s half term holiday;
3. the end of the TTRO be brought forward by one week to keep the closure as short as possible;
4. in recognition that the closure is for two complete weeks 24/7 the developer should ensure that actual works take place 24/7 with **day and night** working to reduce the closure time further;
5. in the event that it is not possible to bring forward the works at this notice, my Council wishes the TTRO to be rescinded and the works rescheduled for the school summer holidays, which are currently scheduled to begin around 23 July 2021.

Yours sincerely,



Graham Thomson
Town Clerk