

STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL

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Cllr John Williams
Leader of the Council
TDBC

10th August 2015

North Taunton Development

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter of 4th August responding to the Parish Council's views on the above.

I must say that we are somewhat at a loss to identify any '*benefits that will be harnessed from the new development*' as it appears to be currently planned. What we need, and indeed the whole of the town and its surrounding area needs, is a successful solution to the horrendous traffic problems that exist just about everywhere in the built-up area. Flooding the area with yet more vehicles from an extra 17000 more houses, on top of what are already being built, is not going to be much help!

As it remains national policy to seek to reduce the need to commute to work, I hope we will be forgiven for wondering if all of the merits of providing the increased housing in an area close to the motorway and where job opportunities are about to be established were fully taken in to consideration in establishing the Deane's Core Strategy.

No doubt Staplegrove will once again eventually take on its fair share of more development, although I'm not sure if all the 145 houses from our last contribution, adjacent to Silk Mills Road and built on the original Green Wedge at Mill Rise, have actually been sold yet. Surely another 1500 houses is far too many and we expect that the Core Strategy Review process will reduce this number significantly. The annual increase of GDP of 2.8% has never been achieved so we expect the following quote from the Core Strategy to come into play '*if growth occurs at a lower rate, this can be allowed for by delaying development in areas such as Staplegrove and Comeytrowe, which are identified as broad locations*' (page 121). Any development must follow the promoters' promise to maintain the village ambiance and to supply the necessary support facilities and amenities.

You refer to the need to deliver the North Link Road, by which we hope you mean something more than just a connection between the A358 and Kingston Road, early in the development as being the most crucial element. What is imperative is that it should be done before any building starts and be of the correct capacity for its undoubted future increased use. Construction would thereby be more efficiently carried out and life would be slightly better for north Taunton during this period. No housing should be allowed to front on to this road for obvious reasons. Other towns seem to manage growth in the right order and thereby perhaps some benefit for the existing population is achieved. Delivery of the road '*early in the lifespan of the*

development is not good enough. One can't help wondering when Norton Fitzwarren will see their promised benefit.

Also, the new road will not ease congestion on the A358 unless it connects to an enlarged roundabout at Silk Mills. If you can't turn right out of Manor Road now when the lights turn green because of the traffic backed up from the existing roundabout, then you are certainly not going to be able to do so at another set of traffic lights provided closer to the roundabout.

The County Council as Highway Authority must fully play its part and at the right time. It is essential that it carries out its own traffic projection surveys and certainly not to rely on submissions by the site promoters' highway consultants.

Please, all of these points must be addressed before you grant any planning permission.

Yours sincerely

Michael Clark
Chairman, Staplegrove Parish Council