Sat 26/10/2019

Dear Redrow and Origin3,

No doubt the purpose of yesterday’s, rather poorly advertised, exhibition was so that you could be seen to have given the local neighbourhood the opportunity to comment on your proposals. Therefore, one could in fact put your question 5 back to you and ask ‘did you find the exhibition useful/informative’ and hopefully there were one or two suggestions made that you will be able to take on board.

You will not be surprised to learn, from our earlier contacts, that I am disappointed that you do not seem proposed to take advantage of the financial and construction time savings that could be achieved if you connect the spine road directly with Silk Mills Road and adopt the requirement given in the original TDBC brief. The statement given to me that ecological and flooding reasons prevented you from taking this up, frankly, if you will excuse the pun, do not hold water, as I am unaware of the existing Silk Mills road having ever been flooded. The spine road extension of course would certainly be climbing up to a higher level.

It is important to remember that the original TDBC Policy TAU2 called for ‘*a new northern link road from Silk Mills Roundabout on the A358, to Kingston Road, with provision for a future eastern extension around North Taunton’*and sets out that the masterplan should provide for the *‘closure of Corkscrew Lane and Manor Road other than for local access’.*

I suppose that it could be that you wished to try to indicate, for the benefit of the purchasers of your new houses, that the spine road junction position being located something under 200m to the east from Silk Mills, was only for a quiet estate road rather than the continuation of the circular ring road round west and north Taunton that it will undoubtedly become. It will replace this function currently undertaken by the country lane that struggles through Staplegrove village, particularly so as you are required to undertake additional work to restrict Manor Road/Corkscrew Lane for use only by local residents, walkers and cyclists.

I have already listed the many pronounced disadvantages of constructing the spine road junction at this location but would stress that, after any possible brief, slight advantage it may give you in easing the sale of your houses, there will remain for us all the lasting pain of your efforts at trying to achieve the impossibility of an effective three junction synchronised traffic light system. Or is it actually four junctions, as the slaughter house lorries exiting Mill Lane will also have to be catered for, together with  Cross Keys, Silk Mills and the spine road junctions? We wouldn’t want to always refer to this as the Redrow Ripoff.

If the purpose of Thursday’s meeting was actually to see if there was some public relations provision that could be made to ease the lot of neighbourhood suffering during the years while this development was taking place and thereby to put you on the side of the locals, then, making the sensible direct connection to Silk Mills junction would be appreciated by them for evermore and a much more sound highway layout achieved. Now we could call that Redrow’s Return. The necessary revision to the planning consent for this could easily be obtained, probably by way of the yet to be approved full planning application and would achieve a much more acceptable north western Gateway for the Garden Town status of Taunton.

Please fully consider the longer term and the legacy that will remain at the end of the day and do the right thing.

Michael Clark

Chairman, Staplegrove Parish Council