

Dear Ursula Fay,

I should be grateful if the comments below could be placed on the websites of both applications 34/19/0035 and /0036.

Many thanks

Janet Coates

Staplegrave Parish Council

Dear Ursula Fay,

The original stipulated requirements for the North Taunton Development laid down by TDBC policy TAU 2 required

'A new Northern Link Road from Silk Mills Roundabout on the A358, to Kingston Road, and to be started at the west end, to take advantage of the excellent access available from the A358 Staplegrave Road' and 'to have provision for a future eastern extension round North Taunton'.

But instead, the Promoters chose a connection point with the A358 just some 100m to the east of the existing Silk Mills junction and where a 6m deep cutting would be required to form the new road connection. Why did they do that, and why is the Developer Redrow staying with it?

The Parish Council have been asking this question ever since it was put forward but there have been no substantive reasons, logistical or engineering, identified or given for this costly location and no justification has been forthcoming from SCC Highways for their having accepted this position. Nor were its many disadvantages explained to the previous Planning Committee before they granted this location outline permission. It can only be assumed that the Promoters may have had their own rather questionable reasons for this.

The principle objection to this is the imposition of a third, heavily trafficked junction, with Silk Mills Road and Cross Keys junctions close by. These junctions, not roundabouts, will be controlled by a synchronised traffic light system but, because of the lack of adequate space between the junctions, there being only 60m of vehicle storage space between Silk Mills and the new Link road due to the need to provide for vehicles leaving Mill Lane, it will not always be possible for vehicles to obtain their correct traffic lane for their next change of direction, following each traffic light phase. This could lead to some congestion, delay and possible conflict between vehicles, with cyclists dangerously trying to manoeuvre in-between, and all amongst the increased pollution being created by these phased delays. Synchronised three junction light systems are rarely a successful solution to cater for the many traffic movements to be covered and significant disruption is likely to be the result, lasting long after the Developer has moved away.

The start of road construction work at this point would cause widespread disruption and delay to the very heavy traffic flow that currently exists on Staplegrove Road and which is set to get even heavier with all the various housing schemes underway. However, significant cost and time savings could be made for the Developer by reverting to the original proposed direct cross road connection at Silk Mills Road and a safer journey with less congestion and pollution would be achieved. A cutting would still be required but only 4.5m deep and where it could easily be formed using major highway scraper machines.

Unfortunately, it is now necessary for a revised planning application to be made to re-establish this, but with the Developer planning to starting building the Link road at the middle of the development, there would be ample time for this to be obtained and very few objections are likely. The slight costs involved would be more than offset by the savings available because of easier engineering construction, spoil removal and the simpler traffic light scheme. Lorries from the Slaughter House would exit more safely from Mill Lane on to the Link Road rather than on to the A358.

Two junctions, not three, would ensure the best possible highway layout, reducing congestion and keeping increased pollution to the minimum and the Planning Committee must insist that a new fast-track planning application be made to secure this which will be to everyone's advantage, including the Developer's.