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Dear Mike O'Dowd Jones,

14<sup>th</sup> February 2018

**Information which Supports an Outer Northern Ring Road for Taunton.**

It is more than fair to say that there have been many changes in the traffic demands since Parsons Brinckerhoff undertook the investigations necessary prior to producing their SADMP Modelling Assessment and TDBC Infrastructure Delivery Plan Modelling Assessment.

It is understood that SADMP was based on the number of new homes required to house the new occupants of the then anticipated increase in work opportunities in the forthcoming years. Unfortunately, this growth has not occurred and, in fact, very many jobs have been lost. However, since the assessments have been made, a new large employment centre at Nexus 25, east of the motorway junction, has been confirmed and it is likely that many of the new residents occupying the developments will be finding opportunities there. If not, of course, then they will have to travel further afield. Those with jobs in Bristol or Exeter might prefer the cheaper housing available in Taunton. Whichever of these outcomes occurs, there will be increased traffic movements to the east of Taunton and an alternative ring road route which avoids the town centre would be very beneficial.

Perhaps an additional principle change affecting the north of the town is the indication in Parson Brinckerhoff's document that the Staplegrove Spine Road, while catering for a 1500 house development (but not the current 1628 houses), only runs from Silk Mills Roundabout to Rectory Road. Apparently, it was not expected to continue to beyond Kingston Road, as has always been TDBC intention, and it is shown at about a third of the length now envisaged, (see their Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5). It must assume that all its generated additional traffic will connect to the A358 roundabout.

Also, the above Figure 4 does not include the Ford Farm development (450 houses) and the Former Cider Factory (439 houses), which are both necessary to complete the Norton Fitzwarren Relief Road and so presumably their resulting extra cars have also not been taken account of and the correct up-to-date traffic numbers have not been used. Nerrols Farm development is included but there is no indication of the extension of Nerrols Drive northwards to Cheddon Road which is now in the Transport Plan. It is therefore perhaps not altogether surprising that the only locations of the Taunton Manual Classified Counts shown in the appropriate diagram are limited, in north Taunton, to being on the A358, Greenway Road, and Priorswood Road and do not, therefore, identify movements of traffic north of the line of those roads.

We see that there were 13 Car Park Interview stations in the town centre, including the two Park and Rides, and they obviously covered those who are destined for and have arrived at the town centre. Hence the information to identify those that are through traffic should rely on the four Road Side Interview positions, which are situated at Langford, Thornfalcon, South Road and Wellington Road.

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Interview position R1, at Langford, the only one covering the whole area of north Taunton, could have identified those who intended to turn left at Manor Road, Staplegrove, to avoid the congestion on Greenway and Priorswood Roads, but traffic from Norton Fitzwarren and beyond and going across to Walford Cross, including those turning left at Manor Road, are not picked up at all by an interview point. Therefore the figures must have been obtained from the Manual Classified Counts positions which were located at Cross Keys and Silk Mills roundabouts, Greenway and Priorswood roads and at Manor Road junction. But, once again, those who turned left into Manor Road and on to Nerrols Drive etc., to avoid the congestion on their way to Bridgwater or wherever, were counted at the junction but are not ever counted again and so one wonders how the actual destinations of all these movements could be correctly included in the through Taunton figures? It does appear that an outer route, that could have benefitted this traffic and which avoids the town centre, has not been fully covered and that the true demand of through traffic in this area has not been accurately arrived at.

Certainly we know that 804 vehicles are currently using Manor Road/Corkscrew Lane during peak periods and your earlier figure of 758 supports this but, if they are also using Nerrols Drive which I'm sure very many of them are, then they are currently having to get there by rat-running down Kingston Road and through Wellsprings Road, Eastwick Road, Selworthy Road and Bossington Drive. These existing numbers will, of course, increase dramatically as more houses are occupied. The short connection between the now fully funded Staplegrove Spine Road and Cheddon Road would remove all of this and make life easier for many people and at a very small cost.

Such a connection would also reduce the additional congestion at the Kingston Road Gyratory, Priorswood Road and Obridge Roundabouts, Kingston Road/Greenway Road and Kingston Road /Corkscrew Lane junctions which are identified in PB's IDP Modelling Assessment as attributed to the Staplegrove development. Hence, Staplegrove's contribution in CIL and Section 106 money towards the works necessary in helping to alleviate these congestion hot spots would not be needed and could be much better used to fund this short connection and help prevent the increased congestion in the first place. The Transport Strategic Review of 2003 stated that *this route would relieve roads in north Taunton and attract a high proportion of longer trips.*

This section of road might mean crossing the National Trust's land at Pyrland Hall but, if they want to build houses on their land to the west, then accepting a road only across should be a necessary concession on their behalf. Such a link would also enable Staplegrove to be included straight away in the planned high-quality bus services connecting the garden communities and Nexus.

From my everyday experiences I am sure that there is an existing and growing demand for such an alternative way which avoids the centre of the town and by joining up the appropriate lengths of existing and anticipated roads to provide a 6 mile long catchment length round the west, north and east of Taunton would make remarkably good sense.

We would welcome your more detailed response to the above points.

Michael Clark  
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Staplegrove Parish Council