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Dear Mike,

28th February 2018

Information which Supports an Outer Northern Ring Road for Taunton.

Thank you for your comprehensive letter dated 26 February and I am reassured by your confirmation that all the housing developments in the north of Taunton have been included in the modelling for the SADMP. I think I was not quite clear what the heading of Table 1, 'Development Allocations in Taunton (2028 future Year)' meant, particularly as many of these areas of development are not shown in Parsons Brinkerhoff's document at Figures 2 and 4, which are both also dated October 2014.

You kindly offered me a copy of the original advice given as undertaken by Atkins and I'm sure that being able to study it would be very helpful and a copy would most certainly be much appreciated. Thank you.

I am intrigued by the three northern road options that were tested and am happy to see that the green route was one of them. This of course follows the line of the Northern Outer Distributer Road which was identified in the 2003 Taunton Transport Strategy and which had construction work completed at Nerrols Drive and the Crown roundabout on the A3259. This is indeed the route we favour, making the point that, with the extensions both north and south of Nerrols Drive planned in the new Transport Plan, it is only necessary for the relatively short section of road between Staplegrove Spine Road and Cheddon Road to be made to provide a 6 mile long ring road round Taunton.

This ring road would enable 5 of 6 junctions in Figure 4 in the Report, identified as 'key congestion issues', or 'congestion hot spots' in Figure 3, to be bypassed (i.e. at Manor Road/A358, Corkscrew Lane/Kingston Road, Kingston Road Gyratory, Priorswood roundabout, and Obridge roundabout). The seventh last junction at Creech Castle would be relatively unaffected as the same traffic as before would merely arrive from a different direction. Actually, I suppose that this too might be helpful as the A38 has less traffic from the north. Providing this extra link as soon as possible must surely be of tremendous benefit by reducing the rat-running through housing estates and by diverting much of the existing traffic away from the town centre to lessen the congestion there.

I remain surprised and sceptical that the modelling and you both consider that Taunton has no need for ring roads at the present time and that we should wait for another Transport Plan before it is considered again, presumably in ten years' time. It was because of this that I highlighted my doubts on the method used to identify the end destinations of traffic in north Taunton. The advantages of such a route were promoted in the 2003 Transport Plan after all!

With this in mind I am somewhat surprised to see that the orange route, as identified in your letter, formed the basis of your original advice to Taunton Deane in support of the SADMP. This route made use of Lawn Road as a through route and a section of Manor Road which has a blind double bend, before arriving at the Corkscrew Lane/Kingston Road junction. It then, presumably, continued across to Hope

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Corner Lane, which has a single track section of road, to Cheddon Road and then round to the northern extension of Nerrols Drive. Surely, not quite the 'right infrastructure, in the right place and at the right time'!

It is of course only sensible to ensure that any works undertaken under this Transport Plan are appropriate for what is very likely to be needed in the future and hence the use of Nerrols Drive, and also in the south of Taunton Chestnut Drive/Blackbrook Way, is to be expected. Similarly the standard of road being constructed should also be appropriate if what money there is, however it is obtained, is not to be wasted and with there being no need for the work completed requiring alteration in ten years' time.

I am aware of the cost of road construction and of design and in my previous letter I was referring to the very small cost when compared to some of the other options that might have been considered, such as your pink route. The ring road would reduce significantly the contribution of the CIL and Section 106 moneys applicable and required from the Staplegrove development, at the five junctions I referred to above. Of course it is only the connections to the existing road network which has been so far decided with the outline Planning permission and, ideally, the spine road junction with Kingston Road should be moved 150m northwards, which would then make both the spine road and the connecting link much straighter and significantly shorter. With this link established then there would be no need for the 'protected' road included from the spine road to the north, referred to in the Staplegrove East development, which might also give a saving. These moneys could go towards funding the link. The road in this position could preserve a few more of the 100 year old protected oak trees which line Kingston Road and still avoid confirmed dormice nest sites.

I'm sorry to keep going on about the inclusion of this connecting length of road in your Taunton Transport Strategy now and not sometime in the future, but we in the parish and those we talk to in the area do feel, and are sure from our everyday experiences, that this ring road would be a very worthwhile and fully justified contribution to the improved wellbeing of all in Taunton and the surrounding area.

Your further comments would be appreciated.

With many thanks

Yours sincerely

Michael Clark
Chairman,
Staplegrove Parish Council