

MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF CORFE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY JULY 12<sup>th</sup> 2017 CORFE VILLAGE HALL TO DISCUSS HIGHWAYS ENGLAND'S PROPOSALS FOR NEW MOTORWAY JUNCTION AND DUAL CARRIAGEWAY LINK FROM SOUTHFIELDS TO TAUNTON AND TO FORMULATE A PARISH RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION.

**Present:** Cllr J Harrison (Chair), Cllr B Lenthall (Vice Chair), Cllr D Bradbeer, Cllr K Brown, Cllr C Brown, Cllr T Hosie, Cllr J Jackson. Clerk: L. Mackley  
Members of the public.

Chairman Cllr John Harrison opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. He introduced the guest speakers:

**Cllr John Thorne, Blackdown and Neroche, Somerset County Council**

**Rob Hossell – resident of Shoreditch. Civil Engineer with experience of highway construction, helping inform local residents of the key facts extracted from HE technical documents &**

**Tim Burton – Assistant Director for Planning and Environment, TDBC.**

Cllr Williams TDBC had a longstanding engagement and sent his apologies. The Chairman handed over to Cllr Ken Brown who holds the planning portfolio for the Parish Council. Cllr Brown explained the structure of the meeting and invited SCC Cllr J Thorne to speak.

**Cllr Thorne:** acknowledged the good public turn-out and that it was important to hear everyone's views. He stressed the importance that as many individual responses as possible were made to the consultation. This stage is non-statutory but another formal consultation would take place at the end of 2017. There have been recent alarming stories about housing developments which will be addressed by Tim Burton. SCC recognises the need to improve A358. Engagement between SCC and HE fell away and the current proposal came as a surprise. SCC had expected the scheme to provide a Henlade by-pass and J25 link to Nexus, and any new route should connect to J25. HE is answerable to Govt and Sec of State Chris Grayling. Cllr Thorne is working with MPs Rebecca Pow, Marcus Fysh, Neil Parish, Ian Liddell-Grainger whose constituencies are all affected to some degree, and will have influence on Sec of State.

Cllr Jackson asked if SCC is supportive of moving London traffic via Taunton.

SCC is broadly supportive of the 'corridor' of A roads to form the expressway but with improvements to the A358. Of the four original options 2A/2B linking into J25 is preferred. SCC is only a consultee. So much detail is not included that a decision is difficult and SCC is asking for more data before the formal consultation.

Cllr K Brown invited Rob Hossell to speak.

**Rob Hossell:**

Five local Parishes wrote to Chris Grayling four weeks ago and have not received a response. Every parishioner needs to respond individually to the consultation. Letters are available to download on Stoke St Mary website. Rob gave a slide presentation outlining the

consultation process and how four options have been reduced to just one, Option 8+NFS (north facing sliproad). Cost/benefit ratios explained.

Full presentation: <http://www.corfevillagesomerset.org.uk/rob-hossells-a358-presentation/>

Discussion took place around 'future development', 'unlocking the potential for economic growth' and 'supporting major development opportunities' as highlighted in Mott MacDonald/SWECO reports released under the Freedom of Information Act.

HE is pushing the benefit of Option 8+NFS as aiding development to the south of Taunton.

The TDBC Core Strategy has no development plans to the south up to 2028.

Rob recommended that TDBC should fully reject 'J25A'. TDBC response to HE was summarised (see slideshow) – a 'flawed consultation'.

**Cllr Ken Brown** thanked Rob for his presentation.

Corfe Parish Council is an elected local statutory authority and should carry more weight than 'one response' and if interpreted that way CPC will challenge the process. CPC represents the community but individual responses are important and should be submitted.

Main purpose of this meeting is to get the view of the Parish. The PC has not been formally consulted, only being sent the Technical Appraisal Report. Further digging for information had been left to individuals. The main concern is the B3170 becoming a rat-run in to a new junction. It would not survive as a 'closed' junction and would need to be opened up to justify the expenditure. Corfe could become another Henlade. Corfe PC will take account of all views and not discount the concerns of neighbouring parishes.

Cllr Brown invited Tim Burton to speak, representing TDBC.

**Tim Burton (Assistant Director for Planning and Environment TDBC):**

Everything said so far is a true and accurate view of the HE proposals. He had sat on a stakeholder group with HE, but there had been no meetings since the consultation period started. The view of TDBC reflects what has been said this evening. Nexus is being promoted based on a direct J25 link and needs direct traffic from the A303 to benefit fully.

The consultation has not justified the proposal of Option 8+NFS. TDBC is supportive in principle of an 'expressway' and A358 improvements rather than A303 and wishes to engage with all stakeholders.

The Core Strategy commenced 10 years ago, dealing with Monkton Heathfield, Staplegrove, Comeytrowe & Trull, and was adopted this year. TDBC plans are up to date and no other sites are being looked at. Delivery of the CS is good and there are no current plans to deviate from it.

With an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment, future growth rates and needs may actually be less than forecast in which case the CS could extend another 5 years after 2028.

There has been no engagement from HE with TDBC re additional land for development.

HE will have engaged with local landowners so 'developers' will have 'plans' but nothing else is supported by TDBC whilst the Core Strategy is in place.

The proposed junction is in a difficult site for improving access into Taunton. There is no proposal for a link to Corfe/B3170.

The planned housing allocation for Comeytrowe & Trull could benefit from a junction but that is not being looked at at this time, and would not be the proposed J25A.

Conclusion: TDBC has no plans for future development other than those in the Core Strategy, before 2028.

Cllr K Brown thanked Tim for his open and honest discussion.  
(8pm Cllr Thorne left the meeting for another Parish engagement)

**Questions:**

Jacqueline Breslin (Corfe) : An appendix to the TDBC - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment March 2017 identifies a number of sites in Corfe as 'developable' – what does this mean for Corfe ?

**Tim Burton** explained that there is an annual 'call for sites' resulting in willing landowners identifying land they would 'like to be' or 'could be' developed. It is a technical document only and does not imply TDBC support of those sites. The list can be reviewed at the end of the Core Strategy period and suitability and sustainability looked at then.

Luke (Killams) : believes that development to the south is inevitable and that the junction should not be built.

**Tim Burton:** Cannot predict 20-30 years in the future. At this time TDBC is not supporting any development to the south or west other than that in the Core Strategy.

Keith Gosling (Corfe) : available funds are dictating the lowest cost option. Opposition should concentrate on highlighting the errors in the consultation process itself.

**Cllr K Brown:** recommends the Parish Council strongly supports TDBC statement. The consultation process is flawed and has treated local parishes and individuals appallingly. The PC will (i) question the HE Consultation as being badly flawed and (ii) categorically oppose J25A in any circumstances. That opposition will remain at the formal consultation stage unless there are crucial changes.

**Rob Hossell** referred back to the summary of HE not following the key principles of public consultation.

**Further questions:**

Helen (Corfe) : there will be a significant environmental impact, whilst limited in Corfe, Stoke St Mary will be affected, particularly Huish and Stoke Hill woods. Is this being addressed ?

The Woodland Trust is raising an objection. New housing legislation will address development proximity to ancient woodlands. Rebecca Pow MP is Chair of All Party Parliamentary Group for Ancient Woodland.

**Cllr Brown:** the Technical Appraisal Document does include environmental constraints, but written without particular weight , as if prepared to be dismissed.

**Rob Hossell:** the document was rushed out , Taunton at the 'end of the queue' after Stonehenge. £251 million available for A358 scheme, with projected costs of £366 million. It is anticipated that up to 16 national schemes could be cancelled because of cost constraints.

Barbara Fierek (Corfe): not familiar with 'expressway' principles but as local exits are often not permitted from new roads are there any further details available ?

**Rob Hossell:** generally new dual carriageways will not allow local access across the central reservation as it essentially functions as a two lane 'motorway'. The existing A303 is not an 'expressway' as routes cross it. There is no design standard for expressways, but they must be free-flowing allowing a mile-per-minute transfer.

**Cllr K Brown:** the view of the meeting appears unanimous, and will be reported as such: J25A is opposed, and the consultation process is flawed.

Cllr Brown will submit the formal response of the Parish Council. He urged everyone to submit an individual response too.

Full details of the presentation will be available on the village website.

Sarah Llewelyn (Corfe); are there any other environmental bodies that can be involved ?

Cllr Brown: CPRE has good publicity via the national media and has raised a legal objection to the process.

Somerset Wildlife Trust and other local organisations will also engage.

David Orr (Killams Mountfield) : awaiting response to a written request to address the board of HE Ltd.

**All residents who are not signed up to the Corfe village email/newsletter list are encouraged to provide their contact details to Louise , email : [corfeparishclerk@live.com](mailto:corfeparishclerk@live.com)**

**Cllr K Brown thanked Cllr Thorne, Rob Hossell and Tim Burton and members of the community for attending.**

**The meeting was closed at 8.30pm**