

SHOCK

STOP HOUSING OBLITERATING THE CHARACTER OF KEINTON

SHOCK

(Stop Housing Obliterating the Character of Keinton)

HIGHWAYS/TRAFFIC

SUBMISSION



INTRODUCTION

1. In the Keinton Mandeville Village Plan (2007) 76 per cent of residents expressed concern at speeding traffic. 59 per cent supported traffic calming measures. The themes were traffic volume and speeds, the extent of HGV use of the B3153, and pavement safety. All these issues have become worse in the 15 years since the Village Plan was prepared. Despite the best efforts of the Parish Council, precious little has been done by Somerset Highways in response: none of it effective. It is against this broad context the LVA 120 house estate has to be seen. Like other residents of the village, those living on the estate will be car-dependent. On conservative estimates, based on up-to-date traffic volumes and accepted planning standards, the estate will add 600 road trips per day to current levels, increasing traffic by over 10 per cent at a stroke.

SUMMARY

2. **SHOCK's conclusions on the highways/traffic consequences are summarised below:**

- **Throughout the century Keinton Mandeville has been plagued by the volume and speed of traffic passing through on the B3153, which is, in reality, a single lane road in the village centre**
- **Somerset Highways has taken no effective remedial measures. Moving speed limit signs around is as useful as moving chairs on the Titanic! This is borne out by the records of vehicles' speeds through the village well in excess of 30mph**
- **The B3153 from Lydford to Somerton is a dangerous road. The record of fatalities and other serious incidents (some in the village centre) proves this**
- **The LVA estate would add significantly to the problems and risks villagers face in 3 main ways:**
 - **by putting estate residents at risk via the pedestrian arrangements to reach the central village facilities: these are ill-conceived and unnecessary**
 - **by creating an access road junction to the B3153 between a blind summit and a blind bend where sufficient visibility is not available to guarantee road safety**
 - **by adding well over 10 per cent to existing traffic volumes at a stroke- the majority of which would pass through the village centre (and Queen Street) to access the A37 and A303**
- **The Applicants' proposals are based on work which is error-strewn, shows no familiarity with or understanding of local conditions, uses data**

unrepresentative of Keinton Mandeville to make good that ignorance, and, in parts, deliberately sets out to mislead those called upon to assess the Application (as with the estate to village distances, which probably account for the bizarre pedestrian proposals).

It is reasonably foreseeable that the Applicants' proposals will add significant highway risk to drivers and pedestrians. It would be negligent of Somerset Highways and SSDC to approve the current design. In particular Somerset Highways is asked to take a more critical look at the Application and put the village community above drivers in its considerations.

The B3153

Fatalities and incidents

3. The road through the village is a B-road, the B3153. It is a dangerous road where incidents are common, with a history of fatalities and serious injuries. Incidents are only reported and recorded where an injury to at least one person is involved. Schedule 1 to this Submission has been compiled from the recollection of local residents and CrashMap. It shows there have been 9 fatalities on the B3153 between the A37 junction (east) and the B3151 junction (west, below Somerton) since 1980.

Characteristics of the B3153

4. The B3153 between Lydford and Somerton is characterised by several busy junctions, some with compromised visibility or 'pinch points': the crossroads at the centre of Keinton Mandeville; the junction with Barton Road; the access to Kingweston; the 'cut-off' from Reynald's Way; the staggered junction at Christian Cross (where signs have been re-sited to avoid repeated demolition); the acute junction from the Charltons close to the skew railway bridge; and the lanes to Hurcot. The road has sharp bends at Kingweston, and down past Windmill Hill Wood, and most importantly, the blind summit, some 300 metres from the proposed estate access road. Visibility leaving the village is also compromised by the bend in the B3153 just after the Barton Road junction.



B3153 west of Barton Road
junction

Apart from through Keinton Mandeville itself, the national speed limit applies to the whole stretch. After heavy or persistent rain there is significant water run-off from

adjoining fields, with patches of local flooding of the road, and standing water commonplace.

5. Although the B3153 is not officially part of the Somerset Freight Strategy and not designated as a primary route, in reality, it has that status because of the amount of HGV traffic it carries – between 5 and 7 per cent of vehicles using the road are HGVs. This needs to inform the thinking of Somerset Highways and their reaction to another dangerous junction on the outskirts of Keinton Mandeville.

Somerset Highways action

6. Some measures by Somerset Highways have recognised the dangers of the B3153: changes to the traffic light sequence at Lydford to avoid simultaneous east/west traffic; resurfacing and drainage at the Barton Road junction; movement west of the 30mph speed limit; and the construction of a culvert at Windmill Hill to carry spring/flood water under the road. Cosmetic work (rumble strips and signage painted on the road) has been carried out on the approaches to the centre of Keinton Mandeville. Most of these steps have been to assist the safer movement of vehicles along the B3153. None have been effective to reduce the volume or speed of traffic through the village, or to safeguard pedestrians. Somerset Highways view is apparently that no practical, affordable measures are possible.
7. In these circumstances, quite apart from other material planning considerations, a large 'carpark to carpark' development, generating a traffic increase of well over 10 per cent (46 per cent on the basis of the Applicants' traffic flow data), should be refused on traffic and highways issues alone.

The LVA Transport Study

8. This Study has already been discredited by the Elbourn Submission (see also Schedule 2, which includes a second critique done independently). It could not have been prepared, or signed off by anyone who had actually visited the village. It also proposes vehicle and access arrangements which create new risk - for the reasons explained below.
9. Of particular relevance are the following errors, misrepresentations, or assumptions in the Study:
 - the traffic survey understates actual current levels (33 per cent greater than the Study suggests) because it was conducted in a 'work from home' period immediately after a full Covid lockdown
 - the planning of pedestrian routes from the LVA estate is based on unmarked request stops, services which do not exist, and distances biased in favour of supporting a spurious argument that the LVA estate is not remote from the village centre!
 - the absence of appropriate modelling of traffic which reflects the tendency of traffic to bunch behind slower-moving vehicles, and using lower than actual figures for volume and the incidence of HGVs

- the use of higher population density and lower car ownership than is the case in Keinton Mandeville, producing results not remotely representative of the village but suggesting a more urban environment with more public transport
- the assumption that vehicles through the village respect the 30mph speed limit.

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility- vehicles

10. In assessing Keinton Mandeville's potential for further development the SSDC Local Plan Review (The Potential for Rural Settlements to be Designated 'Villages') referred to its easy accessibility via the A37 (para. 4.12). To get from the LVA estate (west of the village) to the A37 or A303 (east and south) requires a resident to drive through the village centre and, most likely- since it is the shortest and SATNAV-directed route- down Queen Street and via Common Lane. Only northbound A37 traffic (Shepton Mallet/Bristol/Bath) would proceed directly east to the traffic light junction at Lydford (B3153/A37).

The village centre

11. The centre of the village (from Irving Road to Babcary Lane) is effectively a single lane highway with passing places (gaps between parked cars). Somerset Highways have refused to categorise this length of the B3153 as such because the obstacles creating the single lane (parked vehicles at the shop, and belonging to house owners in Castle Street) are not permanent. In reality they are permanent- see the attached analysis of parked vehicles by time of day in Schedule 3. The photographic evidence of damage to street furniture, pavements, walls, and protective railings is also evidence of the risks to pedestrians. The road is not capable of coping with the volumes of traffic suggested by the Applicants' Study.



Castle Street missing railings - damaged before first COVID lockdown



Vehicle damage to wall in Castle Street
20/05/2011 Crime Reference No. 2011/2954



High Street/Coombe Hill crossroads signpost demolished more than 2 years ago

A second feature of the village centre is the narrowness of the footways in key areas – see photos below.



Outside the shop – High Street
heading toward Queen Street



In the road!
High Street outside the pub



Returning home!
Castle Street

The pavement is so narrow in places that a modern ‘walker’ or pushchair is too wide for it. Even worse, a parent with a pushchair and a toddler simply cannot walk side by side.

side- any parent would recognise the obvious danger of this. Steps are overdue to remedy or ameliorate this problem and avoid the village centre being a no-go area for pedestrians (especially if infants or elderly).

South via Queen Street

12. Obstacles to the most common routes through the village are also created by the single lane width at the north end of Queen Street, the two blind right angle bends at its south end (one on the junction with Church Street) and the narrow railway bridge at the top of Common Lane (dashcam footage will be provided to SSDC to illustrate this). One site considered for housing, 'Manor Farm, Land East of Common Lane' (HELAA E/KEMA/0001), was found not to be suitable because "*Common Lane not suitable for access for the scale of development*" (2020). Since Common Lane will be the route (of choice or SATNAV-directed) for LVA estate residents going south (to the A303 or via the A37) it is difficult to see why Common Lane is any more suitable for them than it would have been for potential residents of a Manor Farm development (except the LVA estate is beyond the western edge of the village and so the village centre has to bear the through traffic).

North via Barton St David

13. LVA residents travelling to Glastonbury or Wells for supermarkets or recreation are also likely to drive via Barton Road, through Barton St David. This village centre too is of single lane width in the centre and has blind right angle bends to the north and south. It too is an unsafe, inappropriate route for more traffic. (Note that the LVA Study wrongly records the speed limits on this road.)

East through Charlton Mackrell

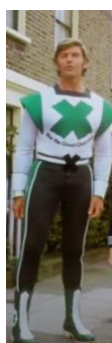
The Applicants' Study suggests 30 per cent of estate traffic will go east to Somerton or Charlton Mackrell, though this is not based on an estimate of actual local destinations or workplaces. This would put more traffic onto the Street/Yeovil rat-run through the narrow centre of Charlton Mackrell village via the dangerous staggered crossroads at Christian Cross.

Pedestrians

14. LVA's Study misrepresents the walking distances for the average estate resident to the village store, playing fields and other locations. To reach the playing field means negotiating the "narrows" of Castle Street. In reality, partly for safety reasons, young families or elderly residents are unlikely to make these journeys on foot. Moreover, the route designed by the Applicants is hardly suitable or safe on foot for several reasons.



Looking left



Looking right

There is no footpath on the south side of the B3153 between Barton Road and Matsam House and the narrow verge slopes down toward the front gardens of roadside houses. The footpath on the north side ends before the Quarry Inn, whose land and car parking extends to the road edge. It is necessary to walk into the road (see photo above, para 10). A safer footpath route already exists from the LVA estate – the footpath past Westfield House onto the High Street (south side) and then right on the south side to the village shop. But the Applicants' rationale is not pedestrian safety: it is a vain attempt to show the LVA estate would be connected to the main village centre.

15. The pedestrian crossing access proposed by LVA in the Study could also only have been put forward by someone who was unfamiliar with the site. The view west from that crossing is even more limited by a dog-leg bend to the left. Presumably this was proposed as a means of access to bus stops at the top of Barton Road. The difficulty is that these are unmarked request stops, and there is nothing approaching a bus service for the village! Added risks are posed to pedestrians by the pedestrian access suggested, not least because a resident would have to cross Barton Road, a busy T junction in itself with limited visibility to the north and no dropped kerbs, as shown by the photo above (para. 14).

Vehicles

16. LVA proposes a single vehicle access to the estate by means of a junction on the B3153, east of a blind summit and west of the Barton Road junction. Yet the LVA Study shows that over 80 per cent of traffic in either direction was travelling above the 30mph speed limit at the point where that access junction is proposed. As mentioned, LVA's traffic figures very materially underestimate this level (see Schedule 2, and the percentage of HGVs in that traffic- currently 6% not 2%). The latest Speed Indicator data – collected from a location just west of Barton Road in July – and available on the Parish Council website shows that, for a day's westbound traffic, 262 vehicles were travelling at over 40mph, and 24 at over 50mph. The 85 per cent quartile was 38.5 mph. The fastest vehicle was travelling at 75mph and others were exceeding 60 mph at school times. At the regular times of peak farming activity the B3153 also carries a good deal of slow-moving agricultural vehicles, including tele-loaders, combine harvesters, balers, sprayers, and tractors, often with various forms of heavy or wide trailer loads. This creates bunching and queuing. However, the authors of the software used by LVA's traffic consultants have confirmed that it was not designed to model the real-life propensity for bunching- another significant flaw in the Applicants' case.



B3153 west of Barton Road
out of sight of LVA estate junction



B3153
350 yards to estate junction!

17. The photo on the front cover of this Submission shows a traffic queue in the centre of the village. It contains no articulated HGV. Yet the queue is about 70 metres in length. Given the 600 householder car trips generated by the LVA estate (excluding household delivery and trade vehicles) it is not unreasonable to expect queues to develop behind east-bound vehicles waiting to turn right into the estate. Based on the typical length of an HGV, and taking into account the tendency of traffic to bunch behind slow or slower moving vehicles (particularly farm traffic) there is a real risk of collision as a vehicle breasting the blind summit confronts such a traffic queue. In wet conditions, and allowing an alert reaction time of 1.5 seconds, a fully-laden GCW (Gross Combined Weight) 44-ton HGV will probably take around 250 metres to come to a standstill from the point where the driver is able to see the road on the other side of the blind summit. The Highway Code states that stopping distances are at least double in wet conditions, and more in icy conditions. The dangers would be greater if another of the Applicants bizarre proposals were to be accepted – that access to the village hall (which is the local polling station, main community venue, and magnet for after-school activities) should be via the estate. But the Applicants rationale is not road safety: it is again a vain attempt to show the LVA estate would be connected to the main village centre.
18. The access road also poses problems for eastbound traffic leaving the village. Much of this traffic is travelling well above the 30mph speed limit (and gathering speed), based on SpeedWatch data but the design ignores this fact. Immediately west of the Barton Road junction, the B3153 'dog-legs' to the left, which renders the exit on the left from the estate invisible until a vehicle is within around 80 metres of the proposed junction. Somerset Highways have accepted 43 metre visibility splays at the estate junction. However, this proceeds on the fiction that vehicles are all travelling at or below 30mph. In fact, most are travelling faster as even the Applicants' Study shows (over 80% in each direction!). For a vehicle travelling not at 30 mph but at 41- 44 mph the splays should be 120 metres, and for a 50mph vehicle, 160 metres. These lengths cannot be achieved working east from the exit because of the bend in the B3153. The Applicants' Master Plan would need to commit to extensive roadworks and open deep verges to make the exit safe, but it does not do so, suggesting instead that houses would border the road. Planning permission cannot safely be granted with a development only 'sketched in', where yet another dangerous junction is created on the B3153.

Construction Traffic

19. It goes almost without saying that the village needs guaranteed protection against the years of construction traffic that would follow permission for the LVA estate. This is a major development (25% of the size of the existing village by house numbers, and significantly higher if measured by area). The village simply cannot cope with any construction traffic passing through the centre on the B3153. Nor, for that matter, could the Charltons.
- 20. For all the above reasons SHOCK asks SSDC to reject this Application also for highway and traffic safety considerations.**

SHOCK

August 2022