

TIVERTON TOWN COUNCIL PLANNING MEETING 19TH JULY 2021

Chairman and Committee Members thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight and on the subject of the Redrow Homes Tiverton EUE Reserved Matters Planning Application 21/00454/MARM. An application that MDDC Planning Officers give every indication that they are trying to rush through to bring it to the MDDC Planning Committee on the 28th July 2021.

I say this for various reasons not least because there have been nearly 100 revised drawings submitted by Redrow Homes over the last 3 weeks making it impossible to raise complete objections. Drawings with very major flaws.

An application where Redrow Homes propose to build 166 Homes This as the first phase of a development that will ultimately, I believe consist of over 1750 Homes.

This is very probably the most important housing development decision to come before Tiverton Town Council and possibly even MDDC for this decade.

Development plans approved for this first phase will almost certainly create the precedence for the complete development and therefore need to be very carefully considered.

I would like to provide information plus ask a question of the Tiverton Town Council Planning Committee Members.

Information I provide I believe which will only help to serve in making informed planning decisions.

I am certain the information will prove very thought provoking even in places quite disturbing given some planning integrity issues that prevail.

While there are very many Tiverton EUE Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and/or Design Guide non-compliance issues in the proposed Redrow Development Plans

I would like to emphasize just a few key ones plus one issue I consider morally so very wrong.

1. That Redrow Homes are showing a total lack of respect and empathy, and by allegedly putting profit ahead of everything else.

This by locating the affordable and social homes north of Blundells Road immediately against the busiest, most dangerous road on the whole EUE development with the highest noise and air pollution.

With no open space or play areas for children. Requiring them to cross the busy and fast moving Blundells Road and without any form of Pedestrian Crossing in place.

Something I hope you will agree is MORALLY INDEFENSIBLE.

2. Redrow Homes proposal to build a row of twenty-one (21) houses and with the very minimum of air gap within 11 meters of the boundary of the existing 10 large Blundells Road properties.

In doing so totally blocking out (obliterating) both the low-level views and even the horizon.

I have provided photographs to the MDDC Ward Councillors this to show the very real impacts. THIS IS NOT IN COMPLIANCE WITH EITHER THE CENTRE TO EDGE OR BLOCK DESIGN KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE TIVERTON EUE MASTERPLAN AND/OR THE DESIGN GUIDE OR EVEN THE NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK DOCUMENT.

The line of these 21 Houses is also something the Design Review Panel picked upon.

3. The Redrow Homes proposal to build a 3-story apartment block within 38 meters of the boundary of the existing Blundells Road properties further obliterating the views of the horizon.
4. Failure to protect the Blundells School vista by locating the Apartment Block in full sightline of Blundells Preparatory School and playing fields. Again, something the Tiverton EUE Masterplan requires should not be allowed to happen.
5. Redrow Homes failing to provide a 5-meter-wide landscaped buffer zone to separate the Blundells Road properties from the new development. A similar position for the Poole Anthony Drive properties as well. I WOULD LIKE TO MENTION THE FULL BACKGROUND TO THIS LATER.

WHILE THE ABOVE ARE IMPORTANT POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION, I BELIEVE IT EVEN MORE IMPORTANT FOR THE COMMITTEE TO BE FULLY AWARE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT HAVE CAUSED THIS SITUATION TO ARISE.

TIVERTON EUE PLANNING PROCESS.

The Tiverton EUE Masterplan SPD SECTION 1.7 details a planning process that must be complied with by any developer. It is a prescriptive process.

The Planning Process required the following.

1. That at the Urban Design and Architectural Principles Stage of the process and a process that occurred between June and December 2020 that there should be a Consultation Process.

The consultation should involve the Public also Stakeholder including a workshop plus liaison. It would be expected that Tiverton Town Council elected members would be part of this process. **THIS CONSULTATION REQUIREMENT DID NOT HAPPEN.**

2. That a Design Review Panel consisting of various independent experts would scrutinise the Redrow Design Proposals at various stages in the design process and make recommendations for improvements.

That the Design Review Panel would occur BEFORE Redrow Homes submitted their Reserved Matters Application. **THIS DID NOT HAPPEN.**

There is a video on You Tube and where the Head of MDDC Planning praises the Design Review Panel process.

Redrow Homes only engaged a Design Review Panel just 7 days before their application first came before the MDDC Planning Committee on the 16th June 2021.

The Review Panel Report was issued two days AFTER the Planning Meeting i.e. on the 18th June 2021.

The report was only made available to the Public and Councillors on the 13th July 2021.

THE REPORT MAKES COMPELLING READING. THE REPORT CHALLENGES WHY REDROW HOMES LEFT IT LATE TO START THE REVIEW PROCESS.

ALSO, IT STATES AND VERY CONCERNINGLY AS THE UD&AP WAS ADOPTED BY MDDC, PLEASE REMEMBER THIS WAS WITHOUT ANY CONSULTATION, THAT THE PANEL WAS LIMITED IN WHAT CHANGES IT COULD RECOMMEND.

QUESTION:

WHAT IS THE TIVERTON TOWN COUNCILS PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS POSITION OF THE FACT THAT REDROW HOMES SERIOUSLY FAILED TO FOLLOW THE PRESCRIBED PLANNING PROCESS?

THAT THEIR ACTIONS HAVE BEEN TO THE DETRIMENT OF THE WIDE TIVERTON COMMUNITY BUT TO THOSE WHO LIVE ADJACENT TO THEIR PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IN PARTICULAR BOTH THOSE RESIDENTS NOW BUT POTENTIALLY THOSE LIVING AT MAYFAIR AND POSTHILL GOING FORWARD.

WOULD THE TIVERTON TOWN COUNCIL BE PREPARED TO MAKE A STRONG RECOMMENDATION THAT THE REDROW APPLICATION BE PLACED ON HOLD AND UNTILL THEY HAD FULLY COMPLIED WITH THE TIVERTON EUE PRESCRIBED PLANNING PROCESS

I think it reasonable to say that should the Redrow Homes Planning Application be approved on these terms that it would very seriously challenge the integrity of the whole MDDC Planning Process and not just in respect of the Tiverton EUE Development.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION.

I would like to provide some brief background information and which I am confident will help you formulate a position.

Information that can be fully validated. I am very comfortable in providing this information given the MDDC interim Monitoring Officer in the MDDC Planning Meeting of the 16TH June 2021 declared i had raised a formal complaint. This was a breach of confidentiality.

The serious complaint still being reviewed by an Independent Person appointed by MDDC nearly 6 weeks on.

***** On the 27th November 2020 the MDDC Tiverton EUE Planning Officer wrote an email to the Redrow Homes Planning Agent stating that discussions had happened with Senior Planning Officers and that it was the expectation that a Landscape Buffer Strip approximately 5 meters wide be provided by Redrow's and against the Blundells Road properties boundaries.**

In a further email there is reference to the Landowners Agent making contact with the MDDC Head of Planning and that it was not the intention for Redrow Homes to change their position as a result.

***** On the 4th December 2020 the MDDC Head of Planning wrote an email to two Senior MDDC Councillors advising them that the Landowners Agent had stated that the requirement for the provision of the 5-meter-wide landscaped buffer was being considered as a "deal breaker" in terms of Redrow Homes completing the Land Sale.**

In the same email the MDDC Head of Planning fully referenced the importance of getting the “Linking Road” built (by Redrow Homes”. This to protect the £8.2 million Housing Infrastructure Rebate for the construction of the 2nd stage of the A361 road junction i.e., the new overbridge link.

It is seen that the MDDC Planning officers changed position after this email and were no longer insisting on a 5-meter landscaped buffer strip approximately 5 meters wide.

***** On the 9th December 2020 the MDDC Tiverton EUE Area Planning Officer wrote in an email to the MDDC Head of Planning, saying the following.**

“ I feel backed into a corner as we need the UDAP agreed”.

“ Reluctantly I feel I have to accept it due to pressures to get UDAP agreed”.

Both these comments being made in respect of MDDC Planning Officer making request of Redrow Homes to improve their development design. Both request not being addressed by Redrow’s and both to the detriment of the Affordable and Social Homes residents.

I have asked the MDDC Area Planning Officer to provide details of what pressure she felt under and who was applying the pressure without any response. – Not surprisingly.

Other questions have been asked of the MDDC Head of Planning but answers to these questions are now being vetted by the MDDC CEO I am told.

“”” On the 11th December 2020 the Head of Planning wrote to the Redrow Homes Planning Agent.

“I anticipate good news on Monday and in the meantime am contacting the Ward Councillors to update them on latest position over the document (THE UDAP) with specific mention of the landscape “buffer” to the rear of the existing Blundells Road properties”.

*****On the 14th December at 23.07 Hours the MDDC Head of Planning wrote to the Redrow Planning Agent saying**

“Further to my update on Friday I have contacted the Ward Members as advised and am satisfied that the UDAP document can be signed off”.

What the Head of Planning does not say that the contact was made with Ward Councillors at 23.03 Hrs in an email and very briefly i.e., only 4 minutes earlier.

Separately I received emails later from both the MDDC Development Manager and the MDDC Cabinet Member with responsibilities for planning both stating that Ward

Councillors for Lowan and Cranmore had been consulted and something I know now not to be the case.

In closing I hope you will agree that there are very significant planning issues even integrity issues that need to be addressed and that a halt be placed on the Redrow Planning Application pending a complete review and overhaul of the Planning Process

That Redrow Homes have failed to comply with the prescribed planning process requirements giving Tiverton Town Council Councillors ample cause to ask the MDCC Councillors to do so.

Chairman and Council Members. Thank you for both your time and patience.