

Letter from North Somerset Council, 13 May 2016

Dear Mr Bridger

Thank you for [your e-mail](#) of 21st April and I must apologise for the delay in replying to this. In that you requested that the Council conduct a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment on the collective impact of all the proposed and approved housing developments at North End, Yatton. Please note that I have written separately to Yatton Parish Council , setting out the same points as I have made below.

I have given very careful consideration to the request and have discussed the matter with the Heads of Service for Development Management and Legal services. Officers have always recognized that these have been extremely contentious and worrying proposals for the community and these concerns have been shared by Councillors who have had to take difficult and painful decisions.

The aim of Environmental Impact Assessment is broadly to protect the environment by ensuring that when a Local Planning Authority is deciding whether to grant planning permission that is likely to have significant effects on the environment, it does so in the full knowledge of the likely significant effects, and takes account of this in the decision-making process. In the case of the Yatton developments officers have taken great care to ensure that the analysis and the studies submitted by developers have identified potential impacts on the physical environment, as well as social, cultural, and health impacts. A comprehensive assessment has therefore already been made and we will continue to have regard to these matters as we move forward.

The potential implications of these applications both on an individual and cumulative level has been the subject of considerable attention throughout. You refer to the applications at North End. Consideration has not been limited to North End, or single topics but has attempted to draw out the interrelationships across topic areas and the responsibilities of different service providers just as a formal Environmental Statement would have required. Decisions have also taken account of other developments including those already approved, including not just residential but commercial applications in the area and applications beyond the village.

Accordingly we have examined a series of issues including traffic implications, the village character, sustainability, the landscape, capacity of schools, community development, safety in the High Street, drainage and flood risk, capacity and quality

of recreational, leisure and library facilities, ecology, heritage, public transport, and health facilities. There are no easy answers to the findings of these assessments and I cannot guarantee there will be no impacts in Yatton, any more than that will be the case in any of the other service villages that have been under pressure over the last year.

It is almost inevitable that there will be some impacts that may not be popular with local residents, but that is a direct outcome of the position that the Council has found itself in once the residential numbers were confirmed by the Secretary of State in the autumn. I believe that the Council has fully considered the cumulative effects in Yatton.

This is reflected thoroughly in the Heads of Terms of the proposed s106 Agreement and the recommended planning conditions that have been applied to the committee resolutions to approve applications on two sites. Applications on other sites, at Stowey Park, Moor Road, and Chestnut Close at Claverham are yet to be determined but will also take into account the cumulative effects. A working group of councillors, officers and various representative groups within the village has also been formed in order to assist with the process of place-making and ensuring the s106 agreement is implemented to reflect local needs. It was agreed at the first of these meetings that this has potential synergy with the Neighbourhood Plan-making process as well. There remain difficult decisions to be made on the mitigation provided, as inevitably the resources available through this process will be limited and the Council will have to comply with the statutory limitations on what it can ask of such developers.

Whilst I am taking further advice on the matter, I hope you will see that the combined effects of the various developments proposed in Yatton have been and will continue to be fully considered. I realise that you may not agree with my response, but I hope that you will understand my reasoning.

Yours sincerely

Roger Willmot
Service Manager Strategic Developments
Development & Environment
North Somerset Council