

**Regulation Committee**  
**Thursday 1 December 2022**  
**2.00 pm Luttrell Room - County Hall,**  
**Taunton**



**SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA**

To: The Members of the Regulation Committee

We are now able to enclose the list of public speakers for the meeting on 1 December 2022: -

<b>Item 4</b>	<b>Public Question Time</b>  Public Speakers (attached)
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Democratic Services, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY

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**Regulation Committee - Thursday 1 December 2022 (14.00)**

**Public Speakers etc**

**Item 5 - application - erection of a new primary school and nursery - land at Comeytrowe, Taunton, Somerset (SCC/3938/2022)**

**Objectors:**

1. Carolyn Warburton

Councillors

For the Trull Neighbourhood Plan, we worked with SCC education to support a primary school to provide a cornerstone for the whole urban extension; new possibilities for the children, a focus for the community, a safe place. A place for learning and a place for play.

Now, inadequate public consultation has silenced the Trull community voice. The Site Notice describes 'land at Comeytrowe' and apparently one notice was put up – on Comeytrowe Road – but the site is in Trull Parish!

Contrary to the statement in the Committee Report, this is EIA development, and should be advertised and consulted on as such. The Regulations are perfectly clear. This is a "subsequent application" for a local planning authority's own development. It is part of a multi-stage consent, for which the location was undecided at the time of the principle decision; an assessment must be undertaken at the subsequent stage. See regulation 9!

Start again.

Having read the consultation responses, it is extraordinary that Officers recommend granting permission. Why have a Design Panel, only to ignore them? The proposals are unfit for purpose.

What is on offer here is meagre, nothing to raise the expectations of the local children. More of a child-storage shed. The Outline Permission failed to meet policy for play spaces overall, and this extends that failure. Monkton Heathfield school area is over 4 hectares, this is 2.2hectares.

Community access? You can hire only the hall, and only when the school is closed – not when the ventilation is active.

The school could have gone elsewhere – it is on a waterlogged space, with predictions at times of heavy rain (even for a 'small and urban catchment'!) for fast flowing water and a pocket of 900mm flooding – 'danger for many' This is unsafe!

The area is ideal for treating phosphates, not for treating children. Remember phosphates?

There are 33 parking spaces for 60 staff – scarcely a recipe for a calm start to the day. Pupils will be dropped off on the spineroad – about 220 cars. Not walking, not bikes (48 bike racks), but cars. Oh, and for the 52 nursery places... drive-by? This is unsafe!

The application is for 420 pupils; 640 is the number predicted by SCC. Proposals for expansion must be considered here; how else can the consequences of failure be assessed?

It is another game of brinkmanship. Will this be another decision where profit overrules children's futures? Give them a start!

## 2. Tony Smith

Councillors,

Today, you are asked to consider a flagship element of Taunton's urban extension. Those of you who are now familiar with the site should be concerned at its condition, and the cumulative impact of its development on the Galmington Stream and the Tone. *You* may have had late sight of the LLFA's final report, denied to other statutory consultees and to concerned residents.

The school building is now positioned directly over that area of the site most at risk from surface-water flooding, assessed as High, Medium and Low by the Environment Agency. The water-depth there is modelled to be 0.3 to 0.9m deep, flowing at c. 1km per hour - even on optimistic assumptions. Any change in the parameters used in the FRA would increase the modelled risk to "*Danger for Some*", at least.

The Hydrock drainage report, on which the FRA is based, ignores ANY runoff from the playing-fields - which must exceed greenfield rates. The contentious assertion that "*all surface-water runoff from storm events ...will be retained within the overall site*" is contingent upon adequate attenuation storage-capacity, continuous operation of a Hydrabrace, and discharge through a 150-mm pipe, along an unspecified route to the Galmington Stream. The FRA is required to address the cumulative effect of this Application upon the catchment; it concludes, perversely, that it would be "*beneficial*". What is the LLFA's opinion ?

Local residents, new and old, may be surprised to learn that the Spine Road will not reach the school site until Spring 2024, at the earliest, and that all pupils and staff will have to be accommodated at an unspecified "host" site, until the new school eventually opens. This Application does not embody a design for the necessary total

pupil-numbers on-site, or incorporate the appropriate calculations for fresh and foul-water discharge.

The Travel Plan is based on wholly-unrealistic assumptions for car-usage, public-transport provision, cycle and footpath networks, and presumes that ONLY pupils from the Urban Extension will obtain a place at the school.

Lastly, new material information for this Application has not been advertised in accordance with EIA development.

Councillors, if you are not minded to refuse this unsustainable development, at least defer determination until you, the LLFA, and the Design team can be convinced that it is safe, future-proof, and a credit to Somerset.

Thank you.

**Supporters / Applicant / Agent:**

Coral DuCroq – Planning Agent; Stride Treglown

Richard Healey – Prospective Head Teacher

Elizabeth Smith – SCC Education

- See attached

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# SCC/3938/2022 – Committee Speakers Written Statements

<b>Client</b>	BAM Consulting on behalf of Futures for Somerset SCC	<b>File Ref</b>	154306
<b>Project</b>	Comeytrove / Orchard Grove Primary	<b>Date</b>	25/11/2022

Please find below the ‘written statements’ for application SCC/3938/2022: Land at Comeytrove, Taunton, Somerset being heard at planning committee on Thursday 01 December, these statements summarise the key points that will be presented by the relevant speakers.

## **Planning Agent - Coral Ducroq: Stride Treglown, Associate Town Planner**

The applicant team have proactively engaged with the Council from the very early stages, engaging in pre-application discussions with two pre-application meetings and numerous email correspondence prior to the submission of the application; and of course, held a round of public consultation with a drop in information event held in March 2022 where we answered questions of local residents and provided an online questionnaire.

Throughout the design process we have worked closely with the Council and consultees to answer their queries, and with the education department to ensure that the new facility will be fit for purpose and meet the needs of pupils and staff, both internally and externally, whilst respecting the unique surroundings of the site, and delivering a carbon neutral building using the ‘Passivhaus’ concept. The District Wide Design Guide was referred to from the outset.

Throughout the planning process we have listened to both Council officers, local residents and engaged with the Somerset West and Taunton Quality Review Panel and where possible made numerous changes to the design and layout as set out within the documents held on the Council website, including:

- Amendment to the vehicle and pedestrian access points onto the highway;
- Amendment to the parking arrangements and pedestrian footpath removing parking from the left of the path – attempting to answer comments made by the Review Panel, although appreciate changes have not entirely met their suggestions.
- Initial changes to the colour palette of the school following case officer comments during early discussions.

The school has been designed to accommodate future growth but this would be subject to a future planning application as when the additional space is required.

The school is considered alongside NPPF Paragraph 95 which states that ‘It is important to provide a sufficient choice of school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meet this requirement..... and give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools widening education choice. Councilors are urged to support this application and grant permission.

**Prospective Head Teacher - Richard Healey** – I am still awaiting the final written statement from the Head Teacher, but from discussions with them, the key themes of his presentation at committee will be:

- Enthusiasm for the school to become part of the growing community
- School management of the car park
- Promotion of sustainable travel, and promotion of walking, cycling and scooters instead of the car – these measures fit with the carbon neutral / Passivhaus themes of the school.

- How the school will grow year on year, so approx.. 8yrs from opening that it will reach full capacity.

**Somerset County Council Education Team – Elizabeth Smith**

Plans for the new school at Orchard Grove were approved by Cabinet on 20th January 2021.

The Council has a statutory duty to supply sufficient good quality places within statutory walking distance of a pupil's home address. The Orchard Grove housing development will eventually provide 2000 new homes in the south west of Taunton. Existing schools in this area, Bishop Henderson, Bishops Hull, Parkfield & Trull, cannot be expanded to meet the demand.

As a rule of thumb 2000 new homes could yield an additional 640 pupils. However, in the first instance it is proposed that a 420 place primary school with a 60 place nursery is built, although the school has been designed in such a way that expansion at a later date is possible should demand require it.

While bringing forward another new school for the children on Somerset the Council is also creating the County's first carbon neutral building fitting squarely with the Council's ambitious plans to reduce Somerset's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030.

The design has been based on the 'passivhaus' concept, an internationally recognised, performance-based energy standard in construction.

The Orchard Grove development has seen occupations since May 2022 and as of November 2022 there have been 200 completions, of which there are currently 20 unsold.

The school is planned to open in September 2023 and will open on a host site until the new school building is completed. The Castle Partnership Trust has been approved by the Secretary of State as the Sponsor who will run the school. Applications for a place in reception in 2023 have already been received.

The temporary host arrangements (which have been deployed in Somerset previously) will be at the Trust's Wellington school and 'home to school' transport will be provided.





# Orchard Grove Primary School

- Page 9
- Trust and local enthusiasm for the new school
  - Quality of education – Wellesley Park 'Good', IKB's strong foundations and growth
  - Trust priorities: 'Every Child a Reader'; Early identification of need; Championing disadvantaged and SEND
  - The need for a new school – our support and close working partnership with the LPA
  - Points of discussion from consultees and local residents:
    - Noise levels and traffic control
    - Our commitment to encouraging staff, children and families to walk, cycle, scoot
    - Prioritising positive working relationships between school, the LPA and developers during further phase development
    - Proactivity of putting alternative measures in place if required
    - Our commitment to a curriculum with deep roots in the environment and sustainability

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