

Cullompton Eastern Extension

At the moment Cullompton has at least two major problems: traffic and flooding. The traffic problem is exacerbated by the closure of Tiverton Road next to the Manor House, but it was bad enough before, with congestion in Fore Street and tailbacks to Station Road and the motorway. It shows the vulnerability of the present road network to a single blockage. For more than 30 years Cullompton has called for an eastern relief road and/or another motorway access point, perhaps at Little Copse. No money has been forthcoming for the former, and we have been told repeatedly that the latter is unacceptable on grounds of road safety.

Not long ago there was a serious flood in the houses in the Duke Street area of Cullompton, historically and more appropriately known as Duck Street, next to Frogpool Meadows. This has always been wet land. The flood was a striking example of the fallibility of modern flood risk assessments. Those houses now have the benefit of a flood protection scheme. But that scheme does not reduce the quantity of flood water; it merely directs it elsewhere, causing problems for other people.

It is clear that Cullompton is already suffering from an infrastructure deficit.

The new plan is to build another 2,600 houses on a greenfield site east of Cullompton. That will increase the traffic problem and the congestion in the narrow streets of Cullompton and on the approach roads. If a second motorway access is too dangerous for the present traffic it will be even more dangerous for the increase generated by the new extension. If there is already a flooding problem the new plan will only make it worse. It is rather like a man with a hangover drinking more in the hope that it will make him feel better: it does not work.

There is not enough money available to solve the present problems. It is not likely that there will be sufficient funding to deal with the increased problems. The plan recognises the difficulty and adds (p. 96) “the Council will work with its partners and the development industry to secure external funding to ensure the delivery of the necessary infrastructure.” There is no information about the partners, or where the funding might come from or how much might be available. There is a real worry that the houses may be built but the infrastructure will still be inadequate.

In fact this plan is not an actual plan at all. It is a plan to make a masterplan to do something. We need to know what the Council is actually planning to do. Approving a plan to make a plan is about as sensible as signing a blank cheque. The best advice is: Don't do it.

David Pugsley

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