

COUNCIL MEETING 22 APRIL 2003

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR BULGIN – PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION

The Local Plan enquiry finished at the end of March with the completion of responses to Written Representations. The inspector is expected to report around July of this year. Further consultation may be necessary if the inspector recommends any changes to the plan, but it is hoped that having already accommodated agreed minor changes that this will not lead to an extended further consultation period. We do not want to get into a period of ‘consultation paralysis’.

SWARMMS work continues. Consultants Parsons Brinckerhoff Ltd. are carrying out environmental surveys along the A358 as part of the further investigations required before the government office make the decision on whether to dual the A303 or the A358. They are also carrying out a study called TIES, Taunton/ Ilminster/ Exeter study, evaluating specific traffic movements between these centres of population. They also have a group looking at how any proposed dual carriage-way can be connected to the motorway at junction 25. Studies on the A303 have in the main already been done due to past proposals. It is expected that the results of all this work will enable the government office to report in July this year as to which route is preferred. However due to the level of activity required I believe that this will slip until the Autumn.

The Concessionary Travel Scheme 2003/2004 is now available to all people over the age of sixty. This gives the option of a Somerset travel pass for use on scheduled bus services providing half-fare travel throughout the County, or travel vouchers for customer use on buses, taxis or community transport. Please make members of the public in your ward aware of this opportunity. These passes and vouchers are free.

Consultants Terrence O’Rourke have been appointed to prepare the Urban Design Framework by the end of this year. They will also be preparing the Urban Extension Study. This is a joint partnership between the RDA, SCC and TDBC. They will be liaising with WS Atkins who are preparing a review of Taunton Transport Strategy.

ROY BULGIN