

## **Wainhomes planning application: PA13/09823**

### **Design and Access Statement**

P1: The Design and Access Statement refers to 90 houses. This seems to be consistent with the site plan showing 90 properties, although the application form refers to 94 properties and the Statement of Community Involvement refers to 92 properties.

P9: "The nearest bus stop to the proposed development is in the village approx. 300m"

In the Transport Assessment submitted with the planning application, the distance is stated to be 550 metres. This is the correct distance, not 300m.

P15: "The development will retain and enhance the site's landscape features of existing trees and hedgerows".

However, in the plans, it is clear that the hedges on the western boundary (Tregony Road) will be completely removed.

P16: "The Local Planning Authority were consulted for their informal views and further discussions have taken place with the Planning Authority, the Parish Council." Presumably, this should read "and the Parish Council". However, to the best of my knowledge, no consultation has taken place with the parish council other than through those members of the parish council who attended the public meeting in October 2012.

P16: "A travel plan has been produced which promotes the walking routes from the site." The appendices to the Transport Assessment also refer to a Travel Plan but there is no real explanation of how this will promote walking.

P18-19: The original and proposed plans are shown. The difference between the two is that those houses originally proposed to back on to Parkengear Vean have been excluded in the revised plan. Is it definitely the case that no new planning application could be submitted subsequently to build on any of the open space?

### **Heritage Statement**

P6: "Local Plan Policy is provided by the Restormel District Local Plan First Alteration (adopted August 2007". Probus was not in Restormel, it was in Carrick. Therefore, any reference to saved district council plans should be to Carrick District Council, not to Restormel.

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### **Statement of Community Involvement**

P3: "Wainhomes held numerous application discussions on the scheme in 2012 and throughout 2013 with members of the local community, the Local Planning Authority, Local Council Members, Cornwall Council Highways and the Environment Agency."

It is true that Wainhomes held a public meeting in the village hall in October 2012 to publicise the potential scheme. In February 2013, I wrote to the Land Director of Wainhomes advising him that I was concerned about the development and that 86% of residents said that they were against it, and suggested that he not proceed. We then exchanged 2 emails in April. Otherwise, there has been no consultation with me as local Cornwall Councillor. I am not aware of any consultation having taken place with local parish councillors.

P6: "27% of respondents highlighted a concern with the capacity of the local doctor's surgery and Wainhomes confirmed to attendees that the Probus Surgical Centre intended to expand its practice and that a two storey extension to their facilities had been given planning permission."

The concern of local residents about the capacity of the doctors' surgery is with the GP facility that serves the local community. The Surgical Centre is essentially a private hospital that serves a much wider area and the capacity of this is not critical to local residents. The fact that the owners of this facility have planning permission to build a two-storey extension a) is nothing to do with the Wainhomes development, and b) will not provide any additional capacity for GP services. If the Surgical Centre were to expand, this would merely exacerbate the traffic problems on Tregony Road.

P7: "27% of respondents felt that the current access to the A390 was poor and in response to these highlighted concerns Wainhomes have expanded their Transport Assessment to review the junction of Tregony Road and the A390 in addition to the new access on to Tregony Road."

The Transport Assessment submitted with this application merely concludes that there is no problem with the junction on to the A390; it does not propose any improvements.

P7: "24% of respondents felt that the proposed development would make Probus too big as a village. Wainhomes explained that the proposals have come forward in order to meet an identified need for new open market and affordable homes in the rural areas around St Austell."

Whilst Probus is only about 8 miles from St Austell, it is generally seen to be in the Truro catchment area rather than St Austell and any houses in Probus would make little difference to the St Austell market.

P7: "Following discussions, South West Water have confirmed that the scheme can be delivered and there are no sewage capacity issues."

This seems to be contrary to the planning officer's current understanding of the sewage system as advised by South West Water.

P8: "The offsite highway issues raised by the local public have been reviewed and these concerns have been addressed through offsite highways improvements where necessary."

It will become clear during the process of considering this application that most people will not feel that the highways issues have been addressed.

P8: "A framework travel plan has been produced which promotes the walking routes from the site."

This is just tokenism. Residents will not need a travel plan in order to be able work out whether or not they can safely walk to and from the site.

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### **Transport Assessment**

P11, para. 3.8: Refers to Tregony Road/Marsh Lane junction. Marsh Lane is a name unknown to any residents of Probus although it is possible to deduce from appendices to the Transport Assessment which road the author is probably referring to. Table 3.1 gives traffic figures at 2 places on Tregony Road close to the village centre. The conclusion expressed in para 3.9 are that traffic flows are "low". On page 13, para 3.16 and table 3.2, figures for pedestrians are recorded, also with the conclusion that the figures are "low". Thus, the general conclusion reached is that there is not really a problem here and that is fine for motor vehicles and pedestrians to continue to use this "shared surface".

No evidence has been sought from local users as to whether or not they think that this section of Tregony Road is safe for pedestrians.

Page 14: Accident history: this section refers predominantly to the A390 and the junction with Tregony Road. 6 accidents were recorded in 5 years involving personal injuries but, in all cases, the author concludes that, because they were attributable to driver error, there is no "specific highway safety issue".

No reference is made to the fact that, in 2012, Cornwall Council spent approximately £80,000 to make modifications to this junction because of their concerns about safety issues here. It is likely that the changes have been of some benefit to safety, although not yet evaluated, and it is remiss not to have noted this project and not to have sought any information from Cornwall Council as to what they think have been the results of the changes. It is complacent to say that there is no safety problem because all the recorded accidents have involved driver error.

On page 15, para 3.26, the author states, "In summary, following an assessment of PIA data for the local highway network in the vicinity of the development site, it is concluded that there are no discernible patterns in the cause of the accidents recorded that suggest any existing issues of highway safety."

If the author had made proper local inquiries of users of this road, he would have heard how many local motorists avoid using the Tregony Road/A390 junction as far as possible because of their concerns about the safety there. The conclusion in the report is complacent.

P15, para 3.25: a seventh accident is referred to as occurring "on Chapel Street at the roundabout junction at Carne View Road". Chapel Street ends about 150 metres from Carne View Road; the junction is of St Austell Road and Carne View Road. Furthermore, it is completely irrelevant to the Wainhomes site on Tregony Road.

#### *Public transport: bus and rail*

Page 16, table 3.3: this table was probably accurate at the time of the report although recently First has changed the service such that it no longer runs through to Par or to Treliske and is hourly, not half-hourly.

Page 16, table 3.4: the author lumps the 520 and 522 services together since they both run to/from St Austell and Truro. In fact, they follow different routes, the 522 through the Clay villages, the 520 via Sticker and Grampound, although both converge in Probus. However, the 520 is the evening and Sunday equivalent of the First 27 service, not the 522.

Page 17, table 3.5: the 550/551 service is recorded as half-hourly. It never has been half-hourly, it has been hourly for some years and is currently hourly. However, it no longer runs in the evening. It does not run to Truro railway station, it just goes to Truro city centre in Boscawen Street.

P17, para 3.34: as noted above, the 550/551 service does not connect to Truro railway station. Until recently, the First 27 service did, but not in the evenings, and no longer does so at all.

The above errors in the report concerning bus services do not mean that there are not good public transport services between Probus and Truro. In fact, the services are very good. It would have been sufficient to say that the services are good, but the author, by trying to display detailed knowledge of the bus timetables, has instead displayed a woeful lack of local knowledge and made several mistakes.

### *Development Proposals*

Page 21, para 4.1: "94 residential dwellings", para 4.2 "90 dwellings". Simple failure to proof read the report presumably explains this.

Pages 21-22, para 4.8: the new footway on Tregony Road near the site, extending the 20 mph limit, additional pavement near doctors' surgery – these are sensible measures. However, the works at the northern part of Tregony Road adjacent to the cottages on both sides of the road and Williams Court are not acceptable and will not improve traffic management at these points. See further comments later in relation to the plan shown in Appendix A. (I will discuss this matter with the Council's highway development officer.)

Page 23: Trip generation. This has all the hallmarks of a desktop, theoretical modelling based on a conglomerate of Probus. It takes no account of the particular location of the Wainhomes site and produces, as well as the bizarre 0.1% travelling by "underground, metro, light rail or tram", a split between "bus, minibus or coach" and "on foot". In reality, all those using buses, will leave the site on foot via Tregony Road. Whether these pedestrians then complete their journeys on foot, or catch a bus in Probus Square, is irrelevant in terms of the impact upon traffic in Tregony Road. The pie chart is a nonsense.

Page 25, para 5.7: At this paragraph, it is stated as follows, "In order to define the distribution of development traffic at the site access junction an assumption for the worst case scenario was made. This was that all arrivals to the site would be travelling from the A390/Tregony Road junction and that all departures from the site would be going to the A390/Tregony Road junction. This replicates the shortest driving route from the site to the main road network for journeys out of Probus."

The argument is then followed through in the following paragraphs to the conclusion that the Tregony Road/A390 junction could cope with this increase in traffic. This is hardly an unexpected conclusion in capacity terms.

What this line of argument fails to consider is what the impact will be on Tregony Road running north into the village. Table 5.3 assumes that only 36 vehicles will leave the site between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. and all of them will turn left to join the bypass. No account is taken of those drivers who may be travelling to Truro but choose to drive into the village first to pick up a newspaper, a packet of cigarettes etc. or just because they do not wish to turn right on to the bypass. In addition, no account is taken of anyone driving their children to the school! Whilst obviously it would be ideal if all children from the estate walked to the primary school, in practice, this is unlikely to happen. Furthermore, according to table 5.3, only 7 people leave the estate on foot between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. (based on 5 "on foot" and 2 "bus" the latter walking from the estate to the bus stop in the village).

### *Framework Travel Plan*

This is a theoretical, formulaic travel plan that could have been produced for any new estate anywhere in the country. It provides no meaningful information or guidance for this particular development.

## **Transport Assessment Appendix A**

### **Figure 3.1**

The data on traffic flows at the junction of Tregony Road and the A390 seem to have been collected on just one day in July 2012 and for just two hours: 8-9 a.m. and 5-6 p.m. Whilst there is no reason to think that the flows on that day would be atypical, neither is it sensible to imbue them with such accuracy that the figures are used for precise estimates of traffic flow in all future years using precise extrapolations.

Having said that there is no reason to think that the flows on that day were atypical, it can be said, however, with reasonable certainty that the figures are wrong. In table 3.1, the flow along the A390 westwards, i.e. towards Truro, in the morning peak hour is given as 414 vehicles; the flow on the A390 eastwards is given as 541.

Truro has the greatest inward migration of commuter traffic of any town in Cornwall by far. It would therefore be expected that the flow on the A390 in the morning towards Truro would be greater than the flow out of Truro.

The data for the afternoon/evening peak similarly shows an almost certainly erroneous greater flow towards Truro than away from Truro.

The simplest explanation for the above is that somebody, somewhere transposed the figures.

### **Figure 5.2**

As indicated in the critique of the main body of the Transport Assessment above, the author of the report has assumed that all traffic exiting the new estate will turn towards the bypass rather than the village. This is clearly wrong. From the point of view of assessing whether or not the junction of Tregony Road and the bypass has the capacity to handle the additional traffic, that may be seen as the most conservative assumption. However, the main issue with this junction is not capacity, but safety.

### **Figures 5.3-5.7**

These tables merely compound the errors in the base traffic data.

## **Highways plan of Tregony Road to the village 0008/PHL/01**

### **Window 1, Tregony Road South**

The proposed modifications along this section of Tregony Road seem reasonably sensible:

Footway on east of Tregony Road from new site to join section of pavement coming out of Parkengear Veian cul-de-sac. This is appropriate.

Footway on west of Tregony Road just south of doctors' surgery. This is appropriate.

Virtual footway from north of doctors' surgery towards centre of village as far as junction with road leading to The Bank (this road has no name – it has been bizarrely named Marsh Lane by the authors of the transport assessment). This is appropriate.

### **Window 2, Tregony Road North**

The section of Tregony Road north from this junction to The Square is where there are issues. This is the part of road that suffers most from congestion, conflict

between traffic travelling in both directions, and between vehicles and pedestrians. The visual gateway features are unlikely to achieve anything. All vehicles that use this section of road are aware of the congested nature of the road and the visual elements are unlikely to add anything positive to the road. The proposal for narrowing the road at the junction outside Williams Court would be counter productive and would increase congestion at this point. This is the widest part of the road where there is scope for one vehicle to pull out of the way of oncoming traffic. By building the junction out into Tregony Road, it will make it more difficult for traffic to pass each other. Whilst I can understand why it might be thought that double yellow lines outside of Laurel Cottage, Claremont Cottage and Lamprobus would assist traffic flows in theory, it would undoubtedly be strongly resisted by the residents of these cottages who rely on the on-street parking here. It would not prevent stopping to load and unload, and the no waiting provision would be difficult to enforce. Overall, it is unlikely to achieve any mitigation of the bottleneck at this point.

### **Transport Assessment Appendix B**

For the reasons explained above in referring to Appendix A, it is clear that the figures quoted in the tables for traffic flows on the A390 in the morning and peak hours are wrong. The likeliest explanation is that the figures have been transposed from one to the other.