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Cllr Mark Winnington  
Cabinet Member for Economy & Infrastructure  
Staffordshire County Council  
Cabinet Office  
Wedgewood Building  
Tipping Street  
Stafford  
ST16 2DH

28 July 2014

Dear Cllr Winnington

**TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**RUGELEY PUBLIC REALM**

Members of the above Committee have requested that I should write to you again regarding the ongoing works along Horse Fair in Rugeley. You will recall that I wrote to you on 29 May 2014 regarding the same matter, but so far I have had no response to the issues raised. A copy is attached for your information.

When I last wrote to you the Committee had been informed that the works which were originally intended to be complete by the end of May, had met with various delays and would now continue until the end of August. I now understand that the works are expected to extend into September which is extremely disappointing for all concerned, especially those businesses located along Horse Fair. Not only have these businesses had to suffer months of disruption and inconvenience, many of them has seen their overheads increase as a result of additional cleaning costs, whilst their turnover has declined markedly. Many have lost customers who will never return. The longer these works continue the worse this situation gets.

At last week's meeting of the Committee, Members were presented with an open letter from Rugeley Traders Association, a copy of which is enclosed. The message is simple; the businesses affected need help.

I have previously asked if you could explain what the County Council are able to do in response to the problems associated with the ongoing works and its effect upon trade in the Town Centre, and why the programme for the completion of the works has slipped so significantly. I would like to take

this opportunity to repeat this request, not only for the Committee, but also on behalf of Rugeley Traders Association.

I understand that you attended a meeting of Rugeley Traders Association on 8 July to listen to their concerns. Whilst I commend your willingness to attend, I am concerned that the minutes indicate that you have recommended that businesses should seek recourse from the District Council via rate reductions and reduced car parking charges. Not only does this suggestion 'pass the buck', it is also not particularly helpful. I understand that some of the businesses along Horse Fair do not pay rates, and the car parking issue is less to do with charges but the fact that most of the on-street parking is not available due to the presence of contractor's vehicles and materials.

The real issue is that the businesses in this location have suffered financially as a consequence of the works which are clearly the responsibility of Staffordshire County Council. Therefore, the County Council should look to provide a positive response to the plight of the businesses, especially as the work has taken considerably longer than planned.

Finally, in view of the number of times the Rugeley Public Realm works have been discussed with the Committee, Members have agreed that it would be helpful if you could meet with them in the near future to discuss an appropriate response to this problematic issue. I understand that you are not available when the Committee is next due to meet on 8 October 2014, so instead I would suggest that a meeting should be convened in September to discuss this issue specifically. I would be grateful if you could give me an indication of your availability during this period so we can identify an appropriate date.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

CLlr Alison Spicer  
Chairman, Town Centre Regeneration Policy Development Committee

cc. Rugeley Traders Association