

FERN Submissions for 2 June 2021

Supporting Submission No 20026497

8. Homes & Amenity impact assessment by Derek Green

For ease of reference "West" means a 2 village bypass ("2VB") alignment west of Foxburrow Wood and "East" means an alignment east of Foxburrow Wood, as proposed by the Parish Council.

Introduction

1 My name is Derek Green. I am a member of the FERN association (Farnham Environment Residents & Neighbours).

2 Amenity Value

2.1 We are opposed to the 2VB alignment effectively ruining the best village walk, in daily use by many local dog walkers and especially busy during spring bluebell season when droves visit our ancient bluebell woodland at Foxburrow Wood when it gets announced on Facebook. The proposed route will so reduce the enjoyment of this ancient PROW that it will be rarely used, in our view.

2.2 The intention to install a bridge over a heavily trafficked and polluting bypass is, to say the least, a poor substitute when there is an option that allows the walk to continue from the village to enjoy a walk around Foxburrow Wood, before linking with the other PROWs to complete a circular route. This would retain the most pleasant walk from the village through scenes of a rural landscape with regular sightings of hares and birds, birdsong and at twilight, deer and bats.

2.3 As my home is directly on the PROW, I know how well it is used and what a really lovely local amenity it is for Farnham villagers. This walk deserves to be kept as pleasant and peaceful for the longest route it can.

2.4 I believe that the "greater good" is better served and on a proper planning balance by giving due consideration to the amenity value on the health of local people. The walk from the village is currently one of bird noise and tranquillity; it has also been a vital part of Covid survival. People's health should matter and it must be right to seriously consider the harm to health and mental well-being when the ExA evaluate the DCO proposals.

3 Homes

3.1 To present to the EXA a more rounded picture of the impact on human beings I list now a brief profile of the most severely affected homes and their inhabitants if "West" were to be approved.

[REDACTED] a Private Home, owners retired
 [REDACTED] a Private Home, owners retired
 [REDACTED] Tourism letting business
 [REDACTED] a Private Home, owner widowed and retired
 [REDACTED] a Private Home, owner recently widowed and retired
 [REDACTED] currently enjoyed together as a Private Home, owner widowed and working
 [REDACTED] a Private Home, owner recently widowed, retired with [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] a Private family Home, owner widow retired
 [REDACTED] a Private Home, owner retired
 [REDACTED] – owner, widow working part time - soon to retire
 [REDACTED] – a Private Home, single owner but rents part of her property as a tourism letting business
 [REDACTED] – owners work for their tourism letting business, home divided into two dwellings, one of which they inhabit
 [REDACTED] – a Private Home, occupants working

3.2 These short profiles of my neighbours and myself are relevant, I believe the ExA should be made aware of them as, like myself, many too are ageing, and each have their own stories to tell. The point is that we are a residential enclave at the Farnham Hall area and there are two families at [REDACTED]

3.3 What we all have in common is that our homes were chosen for the safe and peaceful environment that they provided with nature being a high consideration. The construction and then the use of the EDF west bypass will bring noise, air and light pollution at a time of life when we are least able to deal with it. I realise that we will all eventually pass on, but the EDF alignment causes too much harm to be accepted no matter who happens to be living here.

3.4 It is no exaggeration to say that, during the 2 years of constructing the EDF bypass and then the estimated 10 years of heavy use, that the blight from exhaust smoke, noise, dust, smell, invasion of privacy, security risk, lighting, loss of amenity and so forth will be life threatening or at least life shortening. The impact on mental wellbeing cannot be underestimated.

4 The alternative east route

4.1 This is an extract taken from the Local Parish Council's Response to EDF Stage 4 Pre-Application Consultation

Balanced comparison of the two options

In our Stage 3 submission we highlighted that should the bypass go to the west of Foxburrow Wood (EDF's suggested route) then:-

• 19 residential properties (and three business properties) will see the A12 move closer to them

- 14 of these residences will be adversely affected by the new road's proximity (including Grade II listed Farnham Manor and the dwellings which fall within its curtilage),

- Five of them will be significantly affected.

Conversely, should the bypass go to the east of Foxburrow Wood (our suggestion) then: -

- Only three properties will be adversely affected (two of which will nonetheless be better off than with EDF's proposal),

- Of these, only a single dwelling will be significantly affected (a bungalow in isolated countryside that is only occasionally occupied).

We also highlighted constructional and in-life benefits of an easterly route, as well as beneficial implications for vehicular access to properties and preservation of Public Rights of Way. None of these factors have been acknowledged by EDF at Stage 4. We strongly believe that our main issue – the routing of the proposed Two Village Bypass has been ignored with no concrete reasons or evidence provided to support EDF's proposal in preference to ours. Evidence that EDF are failing to give the same level of scrutiny to both options is being clearly demonstrated in their words and actions. Archaeological excavations are currently being undertaken exclusively along their preferred route; with no sign of intent to do the same along the alternative alignment. This implies that a decision has already been made about which route to proceed with. In the absence of such information, how can balanced and informed decisions be reached prior to a DCO application being made?

<http://farnhamwithstratfordstandrew.onesuffolk.net/assets/Uploads/Farnham-with-Stratford-PC-Stage-3-Consultation-Response-FINAL3.pdf>

4.2 Also attached (at the end of this document) is the Local Parish Council's table (taken from the above document link above) showing distances of homes that will be effected by the TVB. It compares their proximity to; the existing A12, the proposed bypass West and the alternative East. It clearly demonstrates the overwhelming majority benefit by the alternative East.

5 History of dismissal of this alternative

5.1 Suffolk County Council gave their reasons to support "West" in a letter to FERN. They considered "West" to be the "least worst option".

5.2 Even without the vast resources of EDF/SCC FERN has provided evidence that the "least worst option" is a conclusion drawn after focusing on inaccurate information. In tandem with giving insufficient regard to homes, lives and livelihoods, this has led SCC to fail to achieve a better balanced conclusion.

5.3 It was during the consultation period that EDF gave 3 reasons to reject the Local Parish Councils detailed proposal for an alignment "East":

Reason 1 gave an inaccurate account of the number of homes and their distances from the proposed bypass (see the Parish Council's stage 3 Consultation submission for the correct information).

Reason 2 stated that vehicles would opt not to use the bypass as it was a longer route (by +/- 470 YARDS taking an estimated 24 seconds longer) to travel which has since been discounted by SCC and in any event is hard to take seriously. Anybody driving the current route at 20/30 mph will know how much faster a 60 mph road will be, even on the alternative East alignment.

Reason 3 was that the tract of land between Palant's Grove and Foxburrow Wood was ancient woodland which it is not. Natural England has confirmed that it is not AW.

Further, the harms to the landscape, ecology, heritage, amenity, tourism businesses have failed to be adequately reported in the DCO and these discrepancies must be taken into account.

6 Conclusion

6.1 An alignment "West" leaves only two choices for the nearby residents & businesses; to suffer the misery of two years of construction, a collapse in tourism income and a lifetime of blight or, if one has the wherewithal, suffer the great economic losses of leaving a home that was chosen for those golden years. Any compensation scheme doesn't cover costs or overspends or a myriad of other things like enormous personal effort over the years. Many of the elderly here couldn't cope with the stress or financial losses this would entail.

6.2 To date we have had no contact from EDF on how construction would work, surprising given our proximity and openness to their site. On reading the DCO there seems to be no mitigation whatsoever during construction. It must be noted that some of our elderly female widows are frightened about the security aspects; they live in a rural landscape where there is currently no barrier fencing. Then there is the prospect of a new overbridge with long ramps, that will be not only a landscape eyesore but especially as it overlooks people's private gardens and homes.

6.3 There has been no contact from EDF about the possible blocking up of access routes to gardens and garage, nor the land drains for two of the properties that drain into the site, or effects on tourism businesses.

6.4 EDF have shown little to no interest to the well-being of parishioners. To date we have had them turn up on more than one occasion with just 4-5 days' notice doing noisy digger work; there are holiday letting businesses here, advertised as in tranquil rural settings. In fairness to date this has mostly been winter work, but it is a crisis waiting to happen, and causes just more undue stress. One resident has written to EDF asking for better notice, at least so it would enable her to tell guests that the tranquil, rural setting wouldn't be, and just got a "wishy-washy" reply that didn't answer the question.

6.5 In conclusion I ask the ExA to consider the full details on all aspects, as decisions have been made based on inaccurate or misleading information. Our local Parish Council provided a detailed, well thought out and reasonable alternative proposal that should be adopted for the great good.

6.5 Therefore my submission is that, although I can understand that the “greater good” is served by the construction of a bypass, the negative impacts on the health, safety and peaceful enjoyment of the majority of nearby residents and their businesses means that EDF’s West alignment should be rejected.

6.6 People’s Lives do Matter!

APPENDIX B – Comparison of the existing A12 with the two bypass routes

			Existing A12	Bypass to West of Foxbarrow Wood	Bypass to East of Foxbarrow Wood
Residential Dwelling	Parish	Residents / Occupancy	Distance to centreline	Distance to centreline Change from existing A12	Distance to centreline Change from existing A12
	Benhall	3	200 m	200 m 0 m	200 m 0 m
	Benhall	3	245 m	245 m 0 m	235 m -10 m
	Benhall	2	15 m	250 m 235 m	250 m 275 m
	Benhall	1	15 m	250 m 235 m	285 m 270 m
	Benhall	2	25 m	285 m 260 m	325 m 300 m
	Farnham	2	295 m	295 m 0 m	295 m 0 m
	Farnham	2	255 m	235 m -20 m	215 m -40 m
	Farnham	5	255 m	205 m -50 m	365 m 110 m
	Farnham		990 m	485 m -445 m	-80 m -680 m
	Farnham	3	660 m	110 m -550 m	815 m -345 m
	Farnham	2	390 m	165 m -225 m	565 m 175 m
	Farnham	2	400 m	175 m -225 m	560 m 160 m
	Farnham	2	415 m	140 m -275 m	550 m 135 m
	Farnham	1	390 m	195 m -195 m	610 m 220 m
	Farnham	2	400 m	180 m -220 m	595 m 195 m
	Farnham		405 m	170 m -235 m	595 m 190 m
	Farnham	1	415 m	165 m -250 m	590 m 175 m
	Farnham	2	420 m	155 m -265 m	580 m 160 m
	Farnham	3	425 m	145 m -280 m	560 m 135 m
	Farnham	1	370 m	180 m -190 m	570 m 200 m
	Farnham	1	370 m	180 m -190 m	570 m 200 m
	Farnham	4	330 m	345 m 15 m	505 m 175 m
	Farnham		775 m	80 m -695 m	360 m -435 m
	Farnham		785 m	80 m -705 m	350 m -435 m
	Farnham		1010 m	370 m -640 m	255 m -755 m
	Farnham		1010 m	370 m -640 m	255 m -755 m
Business Property	Parish	Residents / Occupancy	Existing A12 Distance to centreline	Bypass to West of Foxbarrow Wood Distance to centreline Change from existing A12	Bypass to East of Foxbarrow Wood Distance to centreline Change from existing A12
Friday Street - Farm Shop	Benhall	-	235 m	215 m -20 m	195 m -40 m
Friday Street - Café	Benhall	-	185 m	170 m -15 m	165 m -20 m
Mollett's Farm - Accommodation	Farnham	13	275 m	225 m -50 m	405 m 130 m

Notes

- All distances measured from centre of building to centre of carriageway. No account is therefore taken of overall road width, property footprint or the extent of surrounding private gardens / land.
- Number of residents / occupants stated where known.
- Proximity of the eastern bypass route to dwellings and businesses could be further improved by beneficial changes to the final A12 / A1094 roundabout location and precise bypass alignment as it passed Friday Street.
- Background colour coding: **RED** = less than 100 m / **AMBER** = 100 m - 199 m / **GREEN** = 200 m or greater

