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12 February 2013

Kathryn Powell
Senior Case Manager
National Infrastructure Directorate
The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
Bristol BS1 6PN

PINS RECEIVED
18 FEB 2013
NID

Dear Ms. Powell,

**A556 Bypass
Flawed Consultative Process for Designating HA 'Preferred Route'
Proof of failed Process enclosed**

I refer to my letter of 9 April 2012. I was grateful for its acknowledgement. I trust its content will be considered. The breadth of objection has been publicised, brought to the attention of the Rt. Hon. George Osborne, MP for Tatton, against this scheme of The Highways Authority (HA), and professionally analysed alternatives, paid for by residents, submitted.

The remit of this letter addresses pivotal issues which clearly prove that the HA's process was, and remains, flawed.

'Too Environmentally Damaging' to 'Environmental Improvement Scheme'

1. In 2003, the then Transport Secretary, Alistair Darling, rejected the proposals to move the A556 away from Mere, into the Green Belt, as '...too Environmentally Damaging...'

In 2009 to 2010, the essentially identical scheme was repackaged, to be published as The 'Environmental Improvement Scheme', and a funding bid succeeded under the Rt. Hon. George Osborne in The Spending Review, October 2010.

This is the most extraordinary misnomer and turnabout I have seen during my lifetime in service in the public sector.
(*q.v. Private Eye: #1313. Page 8*).

Proof of failure to Consult evenly and fairly to Parishioners within Tatton Constituency

2. I can relate with absolute certainty that High Legh Parishioners knew nothing of the change from 'Route A' (= moderate 'Online' widening and junction bypasses to the existing A556 route, directed to be developed after the 2003 rejection of 'Route B' (= a new A556 to the North West of that existing).

'High Legh Parish Council didn't know about the change...'
(to preferred route B)

Ms. Doreen Walker, Clerk to High Legh Parish Council, 13 September 2011

Enclosure:

Original email from Clerk to High Legh Parish Council, of 13 September 2011. This confirms, unequivocally, that the HA 'Consultation', which resulted in designation of their 'Preferred Route', was uneven through Tatton constituency, flawed, and failed.

3. This failure to Consult comprehensively with *all* affected Tatton Constituents was raised with Mr J Bloom, HA project leader, on October 17th, 2011 at a public meeting held in High Legh Primary School hall, attended by hundreds of local residents who knew nothing of the HA's change of route plan.

When confronted with the foregoing which relates to the 2009-10 choice of route 'B', and also, similar failure in June 2010, when Mr Bloom selectively discussed matters with Mere Parishioners, he admitted, blusteringly, in front of the hundreds, the inadequacies. An Audio file of that Public Meeting, quite properly retained, exists.

If the N.I.D. considers it important to hear that audio file, recorded legitimately at that public hearing, please let me know, and I will forward a copy.

4. When the issue of failed consultation was again raised with Mr Bloom, *via* the Tatton MP, he again attempted to say the Parish residents of High Legh, also Tabley, Millington, others affected *should* have known - because they could read about it in The Knutsford Guardian. He also suggested circulation to residents by the HA. That is simply untrue. It is outright fabrication. No one in High Legh or the other Parishes cited know of any such circular.

Mr Bloom, and staff in his HA Office in Manchester also appear to believe that, because that newspaper is distributed in some parts of Knutsford, and that the *postal* addresses are 'Knutsford', the Parishes outside Mere should have received free copies of the newspaper. Mr Bloom appears to believe High Legh and Knutsford are one-and-the-same. They are not. They are 5 miles apart.

It is nonsense of Mr Bloom and his staff to rely on a local 'rag' newspaper to convey information about a Consultation Process, 2009-10, when route B was chosen. *It is, unequivocally, the responsibility of the publicly funded body, the HA, to communicate with affected electorate. The HA have failed to Consult fairly and evenly.*

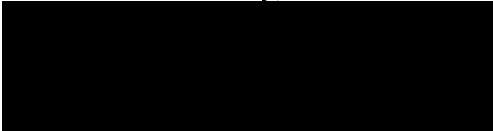
I urge you to exert full and fair democratic process in the N.I.D.'s response to the forthcoming submission by the HA to the The Planning Inspectorate / NID, by rejecting the HA's claim of comprehensive consultation. N.I.D now have written proof of this failure. The Consultation process in designating 'The Preferred Route 'B' ' during 2009-10 (and, to a lesser extent, the recent, early, 2012 process), was seriously flawed and undemocratic.

High Legh Parish Council have 1632 identified residents who knew nothing of the HA's change of route to 'B'. The other affected Parishes' residents will substantially increase that number.

Thank you for your considerations. High Legh Parish residents at the very least, have never been given the opportunity to input choice into the 'Preferred Route'. When the HA ran a later, so-called 'Consultation Exercise' in 2012, the question of altering the 'Preferred Route' was specifically excluded from the documents or choices. The HA purport to 'listening' - but not to a choice of 'Preferred Route'. Mr Bloom, on 17 October 2011, stated so, about 'The Preferred Route'. Only 'tinkering' with tributary 'feeder road' roads to the proposed A556 were put forward for consultation.

A response would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



Francis W Ballardie
Consultant Physician
GMC 2489140

Dear Dr Ballardie

High Legh PC were not informed about this issue by the Highways Agency. I've written to the Highways Agency and got this reply

"Sorry, the meeting in June was for the 5 parishes the new route passes directly through, but we are keen to extend our consultation now and during the formal process."

None of the neighbouring parishes had contacted us to inform us.

We were asked in mid August by the IPC to comment on the Scoping Report which brought the new junction to light.

Cllr Gail Coenen and Cllr Tim Harrison who both live on [REDACTED] attended the meeting last night and I will ask Cllr Coenen to contact you.

Doreen Walker
Clerk to High Legh Parish Council
Tel [REDACTED]
www.highleghparishcouncil.gov.uk

----- Original Message -----

From: Francis Ballardie

To: Doreen Walker

Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2011 9:28 PM

Subject: Re: New A556 Proposal: Ballardie, [REDACTED] Reply - Ballardie

It beggars belief that High Legh PC 'did not know about this until' - "a couple of weeks ago". What kind of consultative process is this, between the HA / High Legh PC, and their potentially affected residents?

Do High Legh PC not communicate with neighbouring PCs, who did, apparently know about the issue?

As a potentially affected resident, a precise explanation is required.

Could the relevant Councillor please call us to discuss this extraordinary anomaly in procedure?

Francis Ballardie

From: Doreen Walker

Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2011 5:54 PM

To: Francis Ballardie

Subject: Re: New A556 Proposal: Ballardie, [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email. High Legh Parish Council didn't know about the change until a couple of weeks ago. Three of our parish councillors attended the meeting last night at the Swan and reported back to our Parish Council meeting which was held last night.

I have arranged for the Highways Agency to attend our next PC meeting in October. Obviously we are very concerned about how the new proposal will affect [REDACTED]

I will forward your email to our Chairman, Gary Pemberton. and Cllr Hay.