

Rachel Harrex



Kathryn Powell
Case Leader
IPC
Temple Quay House
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6PN

15 April 2012

Dear Kathryn,

Re: A556 Knutsford to Bowdon “Environmental Improvement Scheme”

As a trainee teacher studying in the North West and regular user of the A556, I am writing to express my dissatisfaction at the way the Highways Agency have conducted the consultation process into this proposed road scheme. As such, I wish to be registered as an interested party, as I would like to be kept informed of progress regarding the proposed developments.

I would like to raise the following significant concerns:

Unfair consultation

The consultation has been unfairly conducted and not in the spirit of localism.

The Summary Document (SD) is extremely misleading in that the diagrams illustrate all Mere properties but do not acknowledge the homes to the west of the road. As a result non-locals are being asked to complete a questionnaire based on flawed and misleading information and cannot possibly make an informed decision.

The options laid out in the SD are too numerous and too confusing purposefully to divide the six other communities, in a quest to fragment opposition to the proposed by-pass.

Road safety

I am concerned about road safety along Cheshire country lanes, specifically Millington Hall Lane to Chapel Lane Link Road, with respect to:

- icy conditions during most days in winter, leading to accidents and fatalities.
- gridlock and being unable to cope with 2000-3000 cars on average per day.

Also these lanes form part of a popular well-known cycle route and are criss-crossed by public rights of way, both currently enjoyed by cyclists and walkers respectively alike, but whose lifestyle choices will be discouraged if the proposed by-pass goes ahead. This is contrary to government policies promoting health benefits and reduction in carbon footprint through cycling and walking.

Communities and the Environment

I find the Highway's Agency's term 'Environmental Improvement Scheme' biased and misleading. It will only improve the lives of one community, whose houses were built after the road, to the detriment of at least six other communities.

Besides the environmental impacts to these communities, is the devastating impact to wildlife communities and their habitats should this road scheme go-ahead. The Highways Agencies own environmental studies acknowledge the ecological implications the proposed by-pass would have on a vast array of threatened and endangered species. Habitats of the European-wide protected Great Crested Newt, endangered barn owls, species of bat and many badger sets would be destroyed. Also the destruction of prime agricultural land shows no future thinking with the world population having reached 7 billion in October 2011 and the UK's population set to rise from 62.3 million in 2010 to 73.2 million by 2035 according to The Office for National Statistics (ONS). The Council for the Protection of Rural England have written a damning report into this road scheme and suggest other alternatives which do not damage the environment, consume anywhere near as much land, and all of which are safer and considerably less expensive than the current proposals being pushed by the Highways Agency.

In summary, I believe the exact same road, minus two sets of traffic lights, is proposed to be constructed less than a mile to west of the existing road. I fail to understand how this is justified in terms of benefits to the surrounding communities, safety and the environment, when cutbacks are being made, left, right and centre, This proposed by-pass is a shameful waste of money as the proposals do not even increase capacity and although deliver traffic quicker by a couple of minutes, will still reach a standstill in queues at the M56 junction and since vehicles will be travelling to the bottleneck at 70mph instead of the current 50mph, accidents are more likely to occur due to breaking sharply and the breaking distances required.

I appreciate your time in reading my letter and trust that my views will be taken into account when considering the Highways Agency's planning application.

Yours sincerely,

Rachel Harrex.

cc:

Mr Jeremy Bloom, Highways Agency, Lateral, 8 City Walk, Leeds, LS11 9AT (cc. M Swapan)

The Right Hon. George Osborne MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

Ms. J Greening, Sec. of State for Transport, Dept. for Transport, Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Rd, London, SW1P 4DR.

Ms. C. Spelman, Sec. of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, DEFRA, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR.