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Subject : Highways Agency A556 Knutsford to Bowdon Environmental Improvement Consultation.

By copy of this letter can you please register myself, Trevor Allinson, as an interested party with regard to the Highways Agency A556 Knutsford to Bowdon Environmental Improvement Consultation.

I wish to formally raise my objections and concerns with regard to this scheme under a sequence of headings.

Consultation

- The Highways Agency state that they put forward the "Amended Preferred Route" in 2010 as a result of "feedback from local residents and community groups" in 2009. As a directly affected resident I can confirm that neither myself nor my partner received any information, communication or consultation with the Highways Agency or its representatives in this regard. Following Local Parish Council Meetings and following communication with other Local Parish Councils it appears that no-one in Millington, High Legh, Bucklow Hill, Hoo Green, Hulseheath or Tabley were consulted. Given that these communities are the most negatively affected I find the Highways Agency to be negligent in this regard and that clearly the most affected communities were not represented or consulted with in regard to the re-alignment of the agreed preferred route.

-The Highways Agency informed CBO Transport that they would be contacting landowners and their representatives in advance of the public consultation. The principal landowner in Millington whose land will be most severely affected has never, to this date, been approached by the Highways Agency or it's representatives. Again the Highways Agency have failed to consult with the most adversely impacted people.

- HA were required to deliver Summary Documents before 23rd January when the public consultation began, and in time to alert people to the three exhibition dates. There were six Deposit Locations, one as far away as Sandbach (15-20 miles), all received their Summary Documents by Friday 20th January. Little Bollington School was the deposit for people living closest to the A556, the school did not receive their Summary Documents until 3.30pm on Friday 27th January, when most of the children had already left and the school were unable to distribute them. By the time they were sent out, the **only weekend exhibition** (Sat. 28th) had already passed and very little notice was given for the second exhibition on Tues 31st. The school were never actually told that they were to be a Deposit Location and did not know what the documents were. Again the most adversely affected communities were excluded from the consultation process due to the negligence of the Highways Agency.

- The Summary Document is extremely misleading in several respects; diagrams illustrate all Mere properties that benefit from the scheme but do not illustrate the homes to the West of the existing road that will be negatively impacted. The Summary Document diagrams also show cuttings to be provided along the majority of the route as promised in 2007, which appear in the Summary Document diagrams, The diagrams shown at the Public Exhibition show that they will actually **not** be provided after all, despite the HA's assurances to the public that they intend to "minimise the environmental impacts of the scheme". Non-locals are being asked to complete a questionnaire based on misleading information, believing the scheme to have little or no impact since there appears to be little more than empty fields to the West of the road. As a result the public cannot make an informed decision.

- HA's language, attitude and terminology are biased and misleading. The latest incarnation of the scheme is termed "Environmental Improvement" on the Summary Document whereas in actual fact the scheme spells environmental disaster for everyone West of the A556. In a press release Jeremy Bloom states "It will also improve life for people living along the existing route of the A556, by taking traffic away from local communities." It only improves the lives of **one** community, at least **six communities** will be significantly adversely affected. The scheme as portrayed by the Highways Agency is described as desirable for the local community clearly this is not the case for the majority.

Millington Lane to Chapel Lane Link Road

- The development of the link road above is detrimental to road safety an issue this scheme purports to address. The affected lanes are far too narrow to cope with the Highways Agency estimate of an average of 2000-3000 cars per day which will be "fed" onto Chapel Lane, down Peacock Lane and on into High Legh. The junction will be yards from the most treacherous bend in the whole area and where the lane narrows to barely two cars wide. The above mentioned lanes are currently utilized by farm machinery, horse riders, cycling clubs and nature rambles in addition to local residents. A fatal accident is almost inevitable should this aspect of the scheme go ahead. It is also worthy of note that the figures quoted are an average based on normal traffic conditions, in the event of an accident on the "new" A556 or other road closure this figure would increase dramatically as the lanes become rat runs to avoid delays.

- The link road would not be necessary if the cuttings as promised in 2007 were to be provided. Locals would continue to use Chapel Lane, Millington Hall Lane and Millington Lane as they have done for time immemorial passing over the new road in its cutting. The removal of these cuttings is totally unacceptable in terms of both vital local access to all amenities and environmental impact.

Environment

-One of the scheme's primary objectives is environmental improvement. The fact is that only one community, Mere, benefits environmentally from the scheme. Millington, Bucklow Hill, High Legh, Hoo Green, Hulseheath, Tabley and Little Bollinton are all adversely affected whether via exhaust pollution, noise pollution, significantly increased traffic or destruction of countryside and farmland as a direct result of the proposal. As such the scheme fails to deliver as the problem has simply been moved from one area for the benefit of one community to another to the environmental detriment of seven communities.

-An aspect of the scheme is the creation of a "pond/lagoon" at the behest of Natural England to prevent contamination of Rostherne Mere and the designated Area of Special Scientific Interest due to water runoff from the new road. The "lagoon" is to be situated near J7 of the M56. This "lagoon" will become a catchment area for contaminated water for the entire road and as such will be an environmental deadspot potentially harmful to local wildlife and flora and fauna. In addition to this the contaminated water must be released into the surrounding area whether in a controlled manner or as the result of high rains and subsequent flooding thus introducing contamination into the surrounding area. Further to this the surrounding area is already prone to flooding and no provision appears to have been made to mitigate for this significant increase of water.

Value for Money

The objectives of the scheme as outlined in the Highways Agency website for this scheme are to:

Improve the local environment in Bucklow Hill and Mere

Improve road safety and journey time reliability

Reduce conflicts between long distance and local traffic

Minimise the environmental impacts of the scheme, during construction and once open to traffic.

The scheme fails to meaningfully deliver in all but one of its objectives, namely the improvement of the local environment for the residents of Mere. For all other communities the environment is inarguably significantly worse. The problems presented by the existing A556 are not addressed by this scheme, rather they have simply been moved to another area. To spend circa £200million on a scheme that fails to deliver on its objectives in an age of austerity and credit crunch is quite simply a disgrace. It would be more cost effective just to introduce enforced speed and weight restrictions on the existing A556. This would reduce volume of traffic and pollution in the area, improve road safety and would no doubt cost less than £10million. It may not address all of the issues but would at least represent value for money. The obvious long term solution would be to address the real issue ie Junction 20 of the M6 and not an over-engineered solution as previously tabled by the Highways Agency and rejected by Alistair Darling when he was Transport Secretary. Traffic modelling at the time showed that an improved junction 20 would encourage more traffic to make the direct motorway to motorway connection between the M6 and the M56 and vice versa.

Kind Regards,

Trevor Allinson