

IPG

28 FEB 2012

REF:

Kathryn Powell, Case Leader
Infrastructure Planning Commission
Temple Quay House
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6PN

24 February 2012

A556 Consultation Process

Dear Kathryn Powell,

This letter contains my objections to the consultation process for the scheme to build a new set of roads to replace the current A556 that currently provides a link from the M6 to the M56. Please register me as an interested party and send communications to me email address or my home address

As you are no doubt aware there is considerable local opposition to this scheme and although it has support from some Mere residents I believe the majority in the *whole parish* are against the scheme. Other local villages and parishes are also voicing strong opposition to this scheme. The position of my house being so close to the planned road and now the optional additions makes it easy to label my complaint as that of a nimby. However, I knew where the road was when I bought my house as did the backers of this scheme, mostly residents of Chester Road, Mere and surrounds.

Nimby or not, let me inform you about two of the reasons given to locals over the years for building this road and provide my view regarding these reasons.

1. A primary reason for building the road is safety on the existing road but statistics show a massive improvement in safety over the last 4 years since the introduction of traffic calming. More can still be achieved to increase safety further on this road.
2. The increase in motorway traffic is a stated reason. If that is the case then why not make the M6 and the M56 link north and east. Currently these 2 roads link all ways but north and east. This keeps traffic on the motorway which is I am assured by experts a far safer solution to traffic problems.

The points above are two of many reasons why this road should not proceed but the biggest reason of all is not to dig up over 100 acres of beautiful Cheshire countryside.

I would now like to make some points regarding the consultation and planning process.

1. At the recent meetings to show the road "design" and options it was apparent that the diagrams / plans failed to show many of the houses on the route. The consultation questionnaire is therefore misleading with regard to both the environmental and social impact of the plans.
2. Late delivery of consultation documents and a lack of information about the process meant that some people did not get the opportunity to register their point of view.
3. The new options for the road show that the original design was flawed because it did not consider the movement of traffic to and from Knutsford.
4. The additional options will increase the traffic on country lanes where the existing traffic causes many accident problems mainly in winter but also at other times of the year.
5. The preferred route was definitely not the result of majority feedback from the parish of Mere.
6. Discussions with members of the local community show that the highways agency has not contacted all the local land owners affected by the plans.
7. The general tenor of the printed material is that this scheme will provide environmental improvement and improve the lives of people living on the A556. The people on Chester road will see an improvement but no one else will and the environment is not going to be improved by putting a road through farm land in the countryside.
8. Why are the original cuttings off the design? I chose option other because none of the options are acceptable.
9. Currently the flow of traffic onto the M56 is part controlled by the traffic lights on the A556. As these lights disappear there will be a huge build up of traffic at the M56.

The highways agency seem prepared to throw money at this problem to a level that must surely elicit some type of response from the local MP, Rt Hon George Osborne, MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer. However as yet there is little or no response from Mr Osborne on this subject.

The cost of connecting the M6 to the M56 has always in previous analysis been significantly lower than the current plans. Now the HA expect us to believe this equation is reversed. Mr Osborne needs to immediately appoint an independent review of these costs. The sensible option is to build the connection at the M6 M56.

Further improvement of the existing A556 would also provide a significantly lower cost than building a road from scratch. Compensation to interested parties would be necessary but this appears to be the heart of the argument for those in favour of the scheme.

I am supporting the action group objecting to this scheme and await further information from both the IPC and HA.

Yours Sincerely

Danny and Mandy McNicholl