

13 APR 2012

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5th April 2012

FAO Kathryn Powell
Case Leader
IPC

Dear Ms Powell

Re: A556 Knutsford to Bowden Environmental Improvement Scheme

I would like to register as an interested party in this scheme. I am a local resident and user of the current A556. I am writing on behalf of my husband and I. We live on Hulse Heath Lane, Bucklow Hill, Mere.

I am writing to you with my objections to this both this scheme and the recent public consultation which is to end on the 16th April 2012.

I would also like to draw your attention to the enclosed letter I wrote with objections back in October 2011 to George Osborne, I still stand by the contents of this letter and wish these to be taken into account as part of this public consultation.

My first objections are to the way in which the public consultation has been held. I feel there have been unfair elements to the process as below:

1. The documents sent out are misleading to the public, no properties to the west of the route including my own were acknowledged and this gave the public the view that the proposed route would be going through open countryside and away from any residential areas. This is clearly far from the truth and many small rural communities will be divided by this route. How can the public make an informed decision if the information supplied is incorrect?

2. The documents were sent out late, I only received mine on Friday 27th January, just two days before the only weekend public exhibition. This is not adequate notice of the event given the importance of the road to my local community and I was disgusted to find out that properties up to 15 miles away from the directly affected areas had received their documents the week before.

3. I also feel that the terms in the consultation document are very misleading. The title "Improving the Environment" on the front page is ludicrous to say the least. There will only be destruction of the Cheshire countryside with a new dual carriageway plus the associated infrastructure it will entail, this cannot "improve" the environment in any respect. In addition and in contrast to the title, much of the document then states the amount of destruction that will actually occur and nowhere does it state improvement to the environment other than in air quality to the few properties to the east of the new proposed route. Therefore, I cannot accept that it is an "Environmental Improvement Scheme" and has thus been both misnamed and mis-sold as such.

4. There are far too many (10) options in this document that the public are expected to review as preferred options. This is confusing and therefore should not be considered as fair in the process.

My next objections are to the actual options proposed in the document as below:

1. The idea, which appears in some form in all ten options, is a Millington-Chapel Lane link road. I live in very close proximity to this proposed link and can quite categorically say that all ten options are totally unfeasible. These roads are small country lanes that are barely able to allow two cars to pass in some places. They are used by farm traffic, walkers, cyclists, equestrian road users and are in no way suitable to accommodate the amount of traffic that would pass down these lanes. I am reliably informed that estimates are in the region of 2000-3000 cars per day. This would make safety of these roads a huge issue given that many of these lanes have sharp bends, high hedges, farm traffic turning etc.

2. My husband and I met representatives from the HA at the public consultation and it seems that even the HA believe that the small local roads would be unable to cope with the volume of traffic concerned- so why do all ten options set out include this? Surely a non-starter from the beginning? This link road did not appear in the original proposals set out in 2007 by the HA for their "preferred route", they have deviated significantly from this proposal.

3. A grave concern of ours is that Hulse Heath Lane, which is a single car width lane with deep ditches on either side of the road, a sharp bend and high hedges. This however and unfortunately provides a clear "rat run" short cut though for traffic onto the A50, rather than navigating their way do road down the windy country lanes that the HA have proposed by providing the Millington link road. When we questioned the HA at the consultation, they also agreed that this was likely to happen (!) and yet no measures have been taken to prevent this. If traffic backs up on this tiny lane due to an incident on the M56 or A556 we will either be gridlocked into or out of our property which is clearly an issue. Hulse Heath Lane needs to be made a restricted access road only for farm access, walkers, cyclists, emergency services etc.

Our own view is that the HA need to **revisit the Junction 20 M6** option properly again as part of this consultation. It was over engineered when reviewed back in 2007 and decided against on financial reason as not good value for money. It should have been relooked at and is the obvious place to provide better access to the North West rather than carving up unnecessary amounts of the Cheshire countryside at great expense to the tax payer.

Yours sincerely,


Matt and Sonya Ravenscroft

Rt Hon George Osborne MP,
Chancellor of the Exchequer,
Manchester Road,
Knutsford,
Cheshire.
WA16 0LT

8th October 2011

Dear Mr Osborne,

Re:
Latest A556 Improvement Scheme between M6 Jn19 and M56 Jn7
-June 2011

I am writing to bring to your attention my strong objections to the above planned road scheme. As I am sure you are aware, the history of the A556 "improvement scheme" dates back many years, even decades I believe. However, I do not feel that even after all the time and money spent on expert consultation that a justifiable solution, either on economic or environmental grounds to its problems has been achieved.

The plan in its current form merely represents a bypass to this section of the A556. It involves the destruction of hundreds acres of rural Cheshire agricultural and Green Belt land to create what will in reality turn out to be a new and unnecessary motorway carving its way straight through, dividing and disrupting our community. It is only in 2003 that proposals for an A556(M) were dropped by Alistair Darling and the Highways Agency were directed to find a suitable online scheme for the road to improve its safety and usability and yet what they have come up with amounts to a ludicrously wasteful offline scheme again. There is already a major intersection between the M6 and M56 only a few miles further up the road. Why then does there need to be a further major road built bridging the two only a few miles further east of this junction? Surely the obvious answer in terms of both economic and environmental benefit is to redesign this junction to cope with increased traffic movements and improve flow to the North West and Manchester. In addition, improvements to the North West's rail and public transport systems will further help to reduce the amount of vehicles and pollution and yet this does not seem to have been adequately explored in this case.

There is no doubt that the A556 needs improvements and numbers of casualties/ fatalities on this road are not insignificant but, what I find incredibly disappointing, is that the statistics of these poor people are being used to add weight to the argument for an offline scheme and really they should be used to push improvements for safety. Improving safety on any road does not necessitate building a bigger and faster road in its place.

The latest amendment to this already wasteful scheme appears to be little more than the very expensive icing on an already overpriced cake. It involves changing both the southern and northern end tie-ins to the road. The northern end Millington junction involves the construction of two elevated roundabouts and new slip roads resulting in even more construction over farmland and interruption of rural community life. It also has a potential for massively increasing traffic along these small lanes as the Infrastructure Planning Committee have already stated that it could be used as an "escape route" for A556 traffic when the road is blocked with an incident for example. This is a ridiculous statement and absolutely confirms that this is poorly thought through- these lanes are barely double car width. There is also a proposal to close off current country roads, eg. Chapel Lane, as the A556 will cut through them and this has significant repercussions on the community in terms of walkers, cyclists, equestrian road users, agricultural and local traffic. There was no public consultation over this change by the Highways Agency and we, as local residents, have had a couple of meetings now and I can assure you the strength of feeling regarding both the offline A556 scheme as a whole and the new change to the Millington junction have evoked a strong and heated reaction from the community.

I am a tax payer and public sector worker as a doctor in the NHS. In these times of economic downturn where every penny is being counted and large cuts to budgets are required, I find it difficult to see the justification in funding this hugely expensive (in monetary, community and environmental terms) unnecessary scheme when there is an obvious and superior solution in improving M6 Junction 20 and online improvements to A556. I would ask that you give this important issue your thought and listen to the views of the local community.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Sonya Ravenscroft