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10<sup>th</sup> April 2012

### **Proposed A556 link road between M6 and M56**

Dear Madam

As a resident of Rostherne Village and Priest-in-Charge of the Parish of Rostherne with Bollington I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed new A556 link road, the major part of which passes through the communities within my parish. First I would be grateful if you would register me an interested party in the scheme so that I can be kept informed of progress.

Having visited the Highways Agency exhibition at Cottons Hotel and attended a number of public meetings between representatives of the Agency and residents of the local communities, I believe that I have a good overview of the scheme and the way our residents consider it will impact on their quality of life and on the environment. My overall impression is that while it is welcomed by the residents of one community, Mere, it is regarded with varying degrees of alarm and despair by the residents of the other communities that will be affected. Unlike those at Mere, many of the residents of the other communities within my parish earn their living from local businesses or farming and face the prospect of a severe diminishment of their income. It is possible that those whose farms would be affected would find their way of life economically unsustainable. All residents in those communities also face a severe diminishment to their quality of life. The Non-Technical Summary in the Public Consultation Document lists the estimated outcome of thirteen aspects of the scheme and the significance of their impact.

- Two are adverse during/after construction but neutral in the long term.
- One is neutral during construction but beneficial in the long term.
- Two are neutral.
- Four are adverse during construction but beneficial in the long term.
- Four are adverse.

From my perspective it is significant that the four adverse outcomes relate to Climate Change, Cultural Heritage, Landscape, and Community and Private Assets. In the

case of the latter, the document does not equivocate but plainly states that the scheme will have a beneficial effect on some communities (a statement that I believe should more accurately relate to one community) and a significant adverse effect on others.

I regularly drive along the A556, and at peak periods the volume of traffic causes problems. No one would pretend that the situation as it presently exists is ideal, yet I would question the effectiveness of the proposed solution to ameliorate the situation. Peak periods form only a relatively short section within the overall timeframe of usage, at other times the road works well and permits local residents easy access to local facilities and the urban area of Knutsford and those to the east of the M56. The proposed scheme would cause a real problem in that respect. The increased use of existing side roads would also present dangerous driving conditions, not least due to their use by farm traffic, horse riders and cyclists. A particular concern of mine is that in my parish I am responsible for two churches and while access to them is not a problem at present, I see the new road, irrespective of which sub-option for local access is chosen, presenting difficulties. As a governor of Little Bollington (CE) CP School I also consider that the scheme would present parents who wish their children to progress to Secondary education in Knutsford with a major transport headache.

Much has been said recently about shortfalls in the standard of the public consultation that has recently taken place. The Highways Agency representatives that I have met have been polite, professional, well briefed, and incredibly patient in the face of occasional intemperate comments from residents. However, I believe that there have been areas where there has been a shortfall in transparency. The Highways Agency representatives have stated on a number of occasions that their preferred route is 'set in stone', and that only the minor details of access are open to choice. Irrespective of this, I believe that there are viable and more economic alternatives to the scheme as proposed. The present A556 is flawed as a medium for facilitating travel between the M6 and the M56. While the proposed scheme would produce a measurable improvement, it would be at massive cost to the majority of the local communities affected, whose residents would bear the brunt of the adverse impacts involved.

Would you please note the above, and my request that the Infrastructure Planning Commission rejects the application by the Highways Agency for a Development Consent Order for the scheme as it currently stands.

Yours faithfully

Revd P J Robinson