

Response by the Parish Council of Offord Cluny and Offord Darcy to The Examining Authority's (ExA's) first written questions and requests (ref: 10030393)

Q1.1.5 Applicant Local authorities Parish Councils Please explain when, how and where air quality would be monitored or why no monitoring is proposed with particular reference to NO_x, NO₂, CO, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}.

Q1.1.8 Applicant Local authorities Parish Councils Please explain how the assessment of air quality has taken into account the proximity of the proposed road scheme to sensitive receptors including housing and schools and the mitigation measures proposed during the operational phase in such locations? Where and how would these measures be secured?

Q1.1.10 Applicant Local authorities Parish Councils Table 8.12 of the ES concludes that during the operational phase the overall scheme would have no significant impacts on air quality. Can the applicant explain further how it has reached its conclusion of no significant air quality impacts??

PC As far as we are aware there have been no efforts to monitor air quality in the region of the Offords during this phase (ie post-2010) of the proposal. The Environmental Statement, published in October 2009 made two mentions of the Offords –

10.3.22 A further monitoring survey of NO₂ was undertaken between March 2007 and March 2008

The survey was in the form of a monitoring tube at location designated “WSP22” described as “On post at entrance to field, north of Offord Cluny” The NO₂ level was recorded as 27.0 µg/m³ compared with AQS Objective and EU permitted levels of 40.0 µg/m³ although we believe that these permitted levels may have been adjusted downwards since then. In any case it would be surprising, given the rural siting of the monitoring device – were it not to be so. The key information required is of course the levels of NO₂ and other pollutants after the construction of the road.

The second mention addresses this :-

In the wider area, there would be some individual properties with a small change in concentrations. These include properties in Boxworth End, Swavesey, Longstanton, and in Offord Cluny, where there would be an increase in concentrations of just over 1 µg/m³ with the Do-Something.

So of the five pollutants mentioned by this questionnaire, only one has been measured in relation to the Offords and that around seven years ago. As far as we can ascertain no further environmental surveys of any kind have been carried out within the vicinity of the Offords at any time during this stage (post-2010) of this project. We remain unconvinced that any worthwhile analysis has been done regarding for example diesel particulates – now recognised as much more harmful than they were perceived to be in 2007. Any modelling done in 2008 will not have taken the height of the crossing over the railway line into account, as it was then anticipated to be five or six metres lower than the currently proposed thirteen metres-plus.

Q1.1.14 Applicant Local authorities Parish Councils Have the results of the air quality assessment been agreed with Interested Parties and if so, by whom and if not, why not?

In June 2014 the Parish Council of Offord Cluny and Offord Darcy submitted their response to the Highways Agency regarding the project as a whole. In that document was the following point :-

- *Why are the Offords – likely to be affected adversely by increased air pollution - excluded from being an AQMA? Why has no analysis of our current levels of air pollution been done? Indeed the only places where this has been done seem to be those that will benefit by having the A14 routed away from them. There is a concern that, given the topography, particulates will drift down the hill from the A14 and affect the Offords. Why therefore does this not even appear as part of the proposed air quality study.*

Looking at the pollution study areas that have been employed by the HA in our section of the proposed route it is difficult not to arrive at the conclusion that they have concentrated on areas that will benefit from the route such as in Huntingdon and Godmanchester adjacent to the current A14 route but more distant from the proposed route.

And to answer the above question, in the sense that we received no response whatsoever from the HA regarding our concerns, the answer is “No” and indeed we would ourselves like to know “why not”.

Q1.7.8 Local authorities Parish Councils Table 16.14 of the ES summarises the effect of the proposed scheme on community severance. To what extent have local authorities and Parish Councils been involved in such an assessment and are they in agreement with the applicant over the effects of the proposal? If not, why not?

For the Offords, Community Severance is not a major issue, as far as we can ascertain from the information that we have. The routes to Buckden, Great Paxton and St Neots appear to be little affected. Godmanchester and Huntingdon may be more problematic, as increased levels of traffic within the area are anticipated, given the removal of the viaduct and proposed large-scale housing developments such as Bearscroft farm and Alconbury in the area.

Q1.8.3 Applicant Local authorities Parish Councils. The ES indicates that the urbanisation of the landscape character through the interaction of noise, lighting and visual intrusion from new infrastructure would be a major cumulative effect. Para 18.72 indicates that mitigation to reduce the cumulative effect on landscape character could not be identified and the mitigation for each effect would not fully mitigate the overall impacts. Has the mitigation of cumulative impacts been discussed with local authorities and Parish councils and if so what was the outcome. If this has not been discussed, why not?

Mitigation has been discussed during presentations and exhibitions given by the HA in the Offords and surrounding villages. However, the HA admit that very little is possible regarding measures that can be taken as the proposed road crosses the Ouse Valley north of, and in the vicinity of the Offords. The viaduct over the river and railway cannot be effectively screened, the height will exacerbate noise and light pollution. Moreover, the redesign of the road immediately west of the railway crossing, in order to conform to Environment Agency concerns over flooding, will make the visual impact even worse than previously and make any kind of screening impossible. The HA's own visual representations of these aspects bear all this out. And it is the failure to adequately address these that form the cornerstones of our objection to the proposed scheme.

Q1.12.2 Offord Cluny & Offord Darcy Parish Council How is it thought that the scheme would increase traffic through Offord Cluny, Offord Darcy and on the B104 to the south of the existing A14?

We assume that you mean the B1043, the road that runs from St Neots in the south to Huntingdon in the north, with the Offords positioned along it, roughly halfway between the two.

We appreciate that this is a complex proposal, and indeed part of our concerns rest with the apparent lack of effort on the part of the HA to anticipate the "Law of Unintended Consequences". Previous efforts in the locality, such as the Black Cat Roundabout and the Girton Interchange have generally been worse after HA intervention than they were before, in a way that was not anticipated by them.

So, firstly, like many habitations close to the route, we are concerned about the effects of a closure of the proposed A14 due to accident, repairs or whatever. Since the design has far fewer exit and entry points than does the present A14, it is difficult not to imagine utterly chaotic traffic conditions in our locality. This will be exacerbated if the plan by Network Rail to replace the current level crossing with a bridge in 2019 / 2020 comes to fruition, since at the present time the long delays caused by the crossing closures act as a deterrent to traffic trying to rat-run in an east-west direction.

One of the concerns we have is regarding traffic emanating from south of the Offords, from St Neots and surrounding areas, wishing to head eastwards, to Cambridge and beyond. Their closest eastbound route, the A428 is only a single lane between St Neots and Caxton Gibbet and is already gridlocked at rush hour. This will only get worse when the proposed housing developments at Love's Farm East and Wintringham Park are completed. Heading north up the A1 to get the new A14 doesn't work – there is no planned eastbound route from the A1 to the A14. The obvious choice is to take the B1043 northbound through the Offords and join up with the new single carriageway road,

joining the eastbound A14 at Fen Drayton. So it would not be unreasonable to anticipate greatly increased northbound traffic levels through the village. And indeed if the A428 is blocked, as it frequently is, then we would expect a high proportion of eastbound traffic coming from the A421 and M1 to be redirected by their SatNavs on this route to the A14 via the Offords.