

A14 Upgrade Scheme - Summary of statement by Mark Williams and on behalf of the Buckden Marina Resident's Association (Registrations of Interest Numbers 10030711 and 10030713) at the Public Hearing held at Brampton on 14 July 2015

Introduction

1. The speaker was introduced as Mark Williams, representing himself, the Buckden Marina Resident's Association, and the 90+ individual lodge owners who have all registered separately as interested parties; this is with the agreement of the Planning Inspectorate to avoid unnecessary repetitions of the same points. The effect of the A14 upgrade scheme would be very significant on Buckden Marina if the route proposed was selected, given the present lack of adequate mitigation measures against noise and visual impacts and of the lack of assessment of coherence with other schemes in terms of both timing and of cumulative effects.

2. It had become clear from the recent rounds of relevant representations, Written Representations and Responses that Highways England had not communicated with the right individual; by coincidence, the freeholder of the Marina complex and the representative of Buckden Marina Resident's Association are two people who, by coincidence, bear the same name; communications from Highways England had been hitherto addressed to the wrong individual. Consequently, due to that confusion, the process of seeking to draw up a Statement of Common Ground had not been started; for the record, the correct Mark Williams had not rejected any proposal to do so, simply because he had not previously received any such proposal. Now that the confusion had been resolved, a meeting between the parties was scheduled to get that process underway.

Issues

3. It had also become clear from representations and responses that Highways England had misunderstood the nature and status of the 81 lodges within the marina complex. They are not business properties, or rented out on short holiday lets to multiple individuals by a business, but are individually owned residential properties. They are leasehold residential properties owned by individuals on leases ranging from 99 to 999 years and are completely separate from the marina and leisure club businesses within the complex. In response to a question from a member of the Examining Panel, it was explained that there are no time-related occupancy restrictions on the lodges. In addition, while the scheme boundary (*subsequently clarified as the boundary for Environmental Impact of 600m*) falls alongside the lodges themselves on the northern side of the marina, it clearly cuts through the land belonging to those lodges as is registered on the relevant Land Registry property titles (*copies of which have been subsequently passed to Highways England*) and these lodges in particular are within that boundary. Moreover, the measurement of the distance by Highways England is referred to variously as "about 600m", "over 600m" and "approximately 610m"; with that uncertainty and an allowance of 10% for the scheme location to move during detailed design or construction, there is a high risk that more lodges will fall within that boundary. Accordingly, the lodges must be

treated as residential receptors by Highways England and a proper analysis and assessment carried out.

4. With the previous communication issues, it is not surprising that resolution of the issues raised in earlier recent rounds of relevant representations, Written Representations and Responses by Mark Williams had not been progressed. Full details can be found in those documents, but in brief they are:

a. Noise baseline measurements show significant differences between the Highways England measurements taken at L3 and those taken by Mark Williams independently at L3 and on the eastern side of the marina. The independent measurements show a lower noise level than that stated by Highways England, particularly at night, which would have a much greater impact on the lodges in terms of the relative scale of the change of actual and perceived noise levels.

b. Noise modelling data, GIS details, factors varied from generic model assumptions and constraints (e.g. topography and surface types, heights etc) the analysis of the data and results has not been made available, despite being formally requested on 3 occasions. Moreover, the noise characteristics around the site will change significantly with the inclusion of a new, relatively continuous line source of noise, compared to the current point sources of noise which affect the lodges.

c. The visual impacts of a 6-lane carriageway, across a long viaduct and bridge across the River Great Ouse and East Coast mainline railway, including its approaches, which will be raised from 5m to 12m above existing and surrounding ground levels, means that it will break the skyline along much of its length; this will be very visible from the lodges, particularly from late autumn through to early spring each year, when the relatively few intervening trees are bare of leaves. Moreover, the appearance of the viaduct and bridge constructed of concrete spans with open pole guard rails would be ugly.

d. The lack of adequate mitigation measures to reduce the noise and visual impacts.

e. The lack of any assessment of coherence with other schemes in terms of sequencing, design, traffic flows and cumulative environmental impacts. In particular, the:

i. A428 scheme which, if built ahead of the A14 upgrade scheme, would provide resilience and capacity while the A14 is upgraded and avoid significant delays and disruption during construction.

ii A1 Study (M25 to Peterborough) which, depending on the route taken to the west and the design/location of a new or revised interchange that would be

needed near Buckden, could have a very significantly adverse impact.

iii. Network Rail plans to significantly increase rail traffic volumes through introduction of the European Traffic Management System and to remove the Offord level crossing and replace it with a road, embankment and bridge to the east of the marina. Each will, respectively, increase adverse noise and visual impacts of road and rail traffic close to the lodges.

Other Matters

5. The scheme location and design should demonstrably seek to minimise the noise and visual impacts as far as is practicable, which is consistent with ministerial policy statements and intent, rather than simply adhere to arbitrary limitations.

6. As Highways England are forging ahead with detailed scheme design while the DCO Application is being examined, it was noted that they are doing so at risk, given that the Examining Authority has yet to determine its recommendations to the Secretary of State.

Mark Williams

22 July 2015