

The Planning Inspectorate

By email only – A303Stonehenge@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Our Ref: MSS/TRF50/SS

19th July 2019

Dear Sirs

Re: TRF v Highways England – A303 Stonehenge Consultation
Registration ID No: 20019859

We write on behalf of the Trail Riders Fellowship (“TRF”). TRF has reviewed the deadline 4a responses to its deadline 4 submissions. These relate among other things to TRF’s case on possible amendments to the DCO to overcome its objections.

The opportunity to reply to these responses appears to be deadline 5 (19 July 2019). We are therefore responding within that timescale.

We do not repeat the substance of TRF’s deadline 4 submissions.

The two main points that are made are (i) an objection to retaining motorised use of the link between byways 11 and 12, even just for motorcycles, and (ii) an argument that such a change would be material and/or would require further information or consultation.

Highways England in addition states that there is no proposal to stop up the northern end of byway 11 (although it accepts that the link would be extinguished for motorised users) and that turning arrangements are not proposed (paras.4.3-4). That is not what TRF had understood, but if correct, it hardly resolves the issue. There would still be a problematic cul-de-sac. As Historic England states in its deadline 4a response, if byway 11 is retained as a BOAT without the link, “this would either create and/or necessitate a cul de sac, gating requirements and /or turning facility where none exist at present” (see para.3(d)). Highways England is simply ignoring the issue.

As far as the objection to retaining the link, TRF reiterates that this would not be to *introduce* vehicular traffic, but to ensure that *existing* traffic is appropriately accommodated. It would plainly not give rise to significant additional impacts, but would avoid the problems and impacts identified in TRF's (and Wiltshire Council's) representations.

Further, as TRF has already emphasised, Highways England's proposals would allow *private* vehicular use of the link. The claim that vehicular traffic would be reintroduced and/or would have a significant impact must be seen in this context. Low level recreational use is less impactful and intrusive than regular private use.

As far as the materiality of the change, TRF maintains that no further information is necessary to understand the implications of retaining the link rather than extinguishing it. Evidence about the current use of the byways is before the Examining Authority. Retaining the link would avoid rather than create issues.

Moreover, in environmental impact assessment terms, extinguishment of the link appears to be a matter in the context of the scheme as a whole that Highways England has not assessed as significant. Para.6.13 of Highways England's deadline 4a response refers to ES para.13.9.62 (APP-051). However, that simply states that "[t]he potential changes in severance for vehicular users assessed for the removal of the connection between Byways AMES 12 and AMES11 overall are assessed to be minor adverse and not significant." TRF therefore does not accept the largely unsubstantiated suggestions made by some parties that retaining a minor link between byways for existing traffic would be of significant material consequence, still less one that needs to be addressed by the scheme. *If* there are impacts from retaining the link together with use of the byways, they will be capable in due course of being addressed by Wiltshire Council. It would therefore be disproportionate and unnecessary to have further rounds of consultation or to require any fuller assessment of such a minor change. That said, if the Examining Authority requires any further clarification or assistance on this point, TRF will seek to assist.

Finally, it is important to recall that TRF does not suggest these amendments in a vacuum, but as necessary changes without which its objections cannot be overcome. The alternative option for the Examining Authority would be to recommend that the DCO is not made as applied for, effectively requiring Highways England to reconsider the matter and come up with an acceptable solution.

TRF appreciates that this is just one of many matters that the Examining Authority has to consider, but the volume of interest in it demonstrates its importance. That said, unless the Examining Authority would like TRF to answer further questions upon it or would be

assisted by further information, TRF considers that it has made its case and invites the Examining Authority on that basis to recommend either that:

- (i) The amendments sought are made to the DCO; or
- (ii) The DCO is not made on the basis that it gives rise to an unacceptable impact from the stopping up of the A303 to vehicular traffic (in particular motorcycles) which is a matter that needs to be addressed by Highways England.

Yours faithfully



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