

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Lower Thames Crossing](#)
Subject: Comments on the Applicant's Response to Secretary of State letter of 12 November 2024, Document reference: TR010032/APP/11.8
Date: 30 November 2024 22:39:49

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Dear Case Team

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in the Applicant's Response to Secretary of State letter of 12 November 2024.

2.19 The Applicant considers their proposals positively align with paragraph 3.17 of the National Policy Statement for National Networks (Department for Transport, 2014)² namely that “The Government expects applicants to use reasonable endeavours to address the needs of cyclists and pedestrians in the design of new schemes. The Government also expects applicants to identify opportunities to invest in infrastructure in locations where the national road network severs communities and acts as a barrier to cycling and walking, by correcting historic problems, retrofitting the latest solutions and ensuring that it is easy and safe for cyclists to use junctions.”

I note the National Policy Statement referenced places an expectation on the applicant to identify and correct historic problems with active travel networks. Active Travel England have identified historic problems that they feel should be addressed, the Applicant continues to decline to take action.

“3.0 Specific Opportunities

3.2.1 As noted by Active Travel England, the Applicant proposes to divert NCN 177 on to a temporary route in advance of the main works, and this alignment makes use of Hares bridge, which is an existing bridge over the High Speed 1 railway line and the A2. The Applicant, as acknowledged by Active Travel England, has stated that the bridge is too narrow to accommodate shared use and the parapet height is also too low to safely accommodate cyclists and equestrian users without dismounting. To rectify these issues the bridge would require substantial upgrading, through widening, upgraded parapets, or entire replacement. The Applicant’s consideration is that as the diversion across this bridge for users would be temporary, and that there are alternative routes both east and west of this bridge, that it would not be reasonable for the Applicant to undertake these works.”

The Applicant implies that the Hares bridge is an existing bridge across HS1 and the A2. This is not the case. The Hares bridge crosses the A2 and was constructed to bridleway standard. It is suitable for shared use by people walking and cycling. The bridge across HS1 is an entirely separate structure, which despite being a continuation of the path which crosses the Hares bridge was constructed to footpath standard.

The bridges will be used by a temporary alignment of NCN 177, however that does not make the bridges a “temporary route” in terms of the local walking and cycling network. The Applicant is dedicating a new bridleway alongside Church Road, connecting to Jeskyns Park. The bridleway will be a permanent feature, which loses coherence without completing this connection across HS1 and the A2.

If either of the alternative routes mentioned but not outlined by the Applicant to the east or

west of this bridge were suitable, there would be no need for the Applicant's temporary route for NCN 177 to cross this bridge.

The Applicant should be required to either upgrade the existing bridge across HS1 adjacent to the Hares bridge over the A2, or provide an additional structure to a suitable standard parallel to it.

Whilst not noted by Active Travel England, similar issues occur where the scheme meets HS1 at Brewers Road. The Applicant proposes to provide separated infrastructure on a new green bridge across the A2 immediately north of HS1, and new separated infrastructure along Brewers Road immediately south of HS1 with "cyclists dismount" as their solution to crossing HS1. It is entirely non-sensical to construct new facilities for people walking and cycling with a "missing link" effectively created by the scheme.

The Applicant should be required to provide a separated walking and cycling route adjacent to Brewers Road where it crosses HS1 in order to create a coherent walking and cycling network.

Regards

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