

A57 LINK ROADS – DEADLINE 4 SUBMISSION

Part One

Update to previous submission

For the initial part of this submission, I have updated the document entitled “**My Concerns Regarding The Diversion Of Traffic In Glossopdale From The A57**”, which I previously submitted at Deadline 3, in response to a Question put to me by the Inspector.

The reason for the update is simply the fact that my supporting video was not subsequently permitted to be used by the Case Team. This was due to technical limitations in that registration plates were not able to be deleted from the video footage.

In lieu of that I have deleted any reference to video footage in the document and added several photos to the Arundel part of it, that is to say the road between the Low Bridge and the A57 junction. I felt that the video better illustrated the point but the photos will suffice.

Part Two

Possible New Road/Woolley Lane diversion

The next part of this submission is a written response, below, at the request of the Inspector with regard to Item 3(m) on the Agenda of ISH2 held on Wednesday 12th February.

Derbyshire County Council (DCC) had raised concerns about traffic diverting off the A628, particularly regarding the possibility of a left turn at New Road, Tintwistle, rather than continuing on through the village towards the proposed new roundabout halfway up Mottram Moor.

My response to this specific point, as a lifelong resident and as a motorist familiar with both the road network and traffic issues in the locality, is that I felt it to be a rather curious point to raise. If the Link Roads are to have any value at all then we might at least expect them to reduce queueing traffic through Tintwistle and Hollingworth, making continuation along the A628 a preferred straight-line journey. It would be the quickest and most obvious route to follow.

Given the fact that New Road itself is double parked throughout its length, with Woolley Bridge Rd also double parked in places and with pinch points, this makes it a difficult and circuitous route. It also passes through two mini-roundabouts.

All this, just to arrive at another proposed larger roundabout and only now at the foot of the Moor. Why would motorists choose this over a straight road that takes them to a point further up the Moor in less time? That doesn't seem to make any sense.

The only circumstances I can think in which any diversion of traffic at New Rd might occur, is in the event of an accident or some other reason for an unexpected build-up of traffic in the villages of Tintwistle and Hollingworth.

In this event, given that more and more vehicles and most HGVs are now fitted with satellite navigation, it seems likely that they would be alerted to this in advance. In this scenario, they would be more likely to divert over the dam at Crowden and take the B6105 into Glossop and its environs to arrive at the A57.

This is what currently happens in such circumstances and I see no reason why that would change, provided the Link Road actually worked. It is entirely possible of course that it may cause traffic to queue down the Moor and back into Hollingworth as a result of proposed signalisation of the new roundabout but that appears to be an unknown factor at this stage.

Consequently, if we assume that, if nothing else, the Link Roads were reducing queueing traffic through the villages or at least not adding any more to them, then there would be little or no benefit in turning right down New Road.

As for Woolley Lane, by the time you are through Hollingworth the proposed new roundabout is already in sight so it would be utterly pointless turning off at this point, whilst there is no legal thoroughfare via Taylor Street.

There might well be good reason for traffic coming down the Moor to continue down and take a right turn down Woolley Lane (as they do now) rather than using the proposed Link Road to Brookfield but as I understood it, this wasn't the point that DCC raised.

Part Three

The final part of my Deadline 4 submission follows on from the DCC query and opens up a Pandora's box of unanswered questions which I do feel need to be examined/explored further.

Alternative routes/diversion

I'd like to begin by re-iterating the point that National Highways (NH) have notified the public of an expectation of traffic diversion in the Transport Assessment at 2.2.5 (page 17). They also notify the public of the importance of the 'possible alternative routes' in the "Case For The Scheme" – TR010034 - 4.3 6-10 (pages 47-49).

Commendably, in their Deadline 2 submission entitled 'Local Impact Report', DCC quite rightly note at 6.3 (page 22) 'concerns about the wider impacts of the Scheme on the highways network, particularly on the A57 through Glossop and the A628 through Tintwistle' and at 6.4 'the potential for the Scheme to result in further traffic congestion in Glossop'.

At ISH2 their representative, Mr Blissett, flagged up concerns that "traffic may direct off the A628 through the residential areas or that traffic levels may increase on Woolley Lane if vehicles turn left at the Gun Inn Junction, rather than carry on to the Mottram Moor Junction".

Yet, the elephant in the room here, which wasn't really addressed, is traffic diverting from the A57 to avoid queueing through Dinting (with its AQMA concerns) and instead using the wholly residential

streets of Hadfield Rd, Shaw Lane, New Shaw Lane, Green Lane etc, with further knock-on consequences for Old Glossop and other parts of the area.

I think Mr Blissett, in raising the potential diversion onto New Road & Woolley Bridge, rather avoided referring to this more relevant issue. Despite being tricky, the aforementioned route actually has more legitimacy as a diversionary route, in that, for the most part it skirts an industrial zone with little housing beyond New Road itself.

By contrast, Hadfield Rd, Shaw Lane, New Shaw Lane, Green Lane etc are, as stated, wholly residential and between them host two schools plus an array of shops and pubs.

How is it possible then for Mr Blissett, to raise an issue of frivolous or spurious concern, which he himself played down, whilst having little or nothing to say about a very real diversion that NH have made specific reference to?

Here is the nub of the issue that neither NH nor DCC's representative on Wednesday 14th seemed willing to address. If vehicles are to naturally travel along the A57 through Dinting, which is the primary inbound/outbound route for Glossop, then it triggers alarm bells over the AQMA issue.

If on the other hand traffic 'diverts' either naturally or otherwise, then where do NH or indeed DCC (who, let's remember have issues/concerns over rat-running) expect it to go? If not along the A57 then how will it not rat-run?

I find it curious then that despite flagging up rat-running and making some very relevant points in their Local Impact Report, DCC were very low key at ISH2 in driving home these points and largely ignored the critical issue which is the real rat-running through real residential streets that have been built into the plan for the Scheme.

Indeed, Mr Blissett went out of his way to play down the need for any detailed modelling of the planned rat-run area. He basically implied that Glossopdale residents weren't worth spending £50,00-60,000 on. I absolutely disagree and think that the entirety of the planned 'diversionary routes' should be both mapped and modelled.

He didn't think that spending an extra £50,000-60,000 would help the Inspector make up his mind in reaching a verdict on the Scheme. On the contrary, I think this is an issue of monumental importance, absolutely critical to the credibility and the viability of the Scheme. I think it is vital that the 'alternative route(s)' are both identified and that the whole of the route(s) are modelled.

This is a person whose wages, residents like myself, help to fund and who, as a DCC employee is meant to represent our best interests! One cannot help but think whether his attitude would have been the same if he were he one of those residents, who will have to live with the consequences, should this Scheme ever be given permission to go ahead?

Moreover, as I have clearly shown in the '**My Concerns**' document, DCC have already acknowledged rat-running and speed issues on the 'diversionary routes' by the fact that they have gone out of their way to traffic calm the whole length of these routes, even years before this issue of the Link Roads 'diversionary routes' were even known about.

These routes are tenuous at best and due to planned development are certainly not sustainable. I was therefore concerned that Mr Blissett almost seemed to diminish DCC's testimony and rather underplayed or ameliorated an issue that needs to be fully explored and discussed in detail.

It came across as a huge contradiction from their own perspective. DCC have discouraged traffic through their deeds but on this occasion seemed to make light of traffic diverting from the A57 through Hadfield and other locally affected areas.

If there are truly concerns about rat-running (and there are) then this is surely the area of concern that needs flagging up the most, the area which, in the '**Routes To Market**' document, has been labelled the 'Hadfield Alternative', whatever that may be.

These rat-runs of concern that NH suggest to be 'diversionary routes' have already been calmed by the local authority to deter and slow traffic down. With this in mind, I am left wondering how is it possible for DCC to merely have a Holding Objection and not a fully-fledged Outright Objection. DCC's position on this matter makes absolutely no sense and appears to be totally untenable.

The Hadfield Alternative

Having mentioned the 'Hadfield Alternative' (Had-Alt) for the first time, let us explain what is being referred to here and note the fact that NH have never referred to it and have never even published any documents that refer to it.

In work done by Balfour, Beatty & Atkins (BBA) a document called '**Routes To Market**' has emerged, published to the Inquiry not by NH but by CPRE. In this 249-page tome, two references are made to something which is described as the 'Had-Alt'

The first reference on page 56 refers to data collected on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday between 7/9/15 & 24/10/15. A couple of points of interest on this. First, the data has been collected on the quietest days of the week. Secondly, the data, which is to be found in Appendix A of the document, appears to have been redacted.

The second and final reference is found on page 87 and states:

"The enhancements of the model were focused on replicating observed journey times of the key sections of the A57 and A628 in the located study area. As such, an additional journey time validation route has been included, which has been described as the **Hadfield Alternative** (my emphasis). Figures 8.6 presents the journey time routes used to validate the TPU Stage 3 base model".

The Had-Alt is then shown in Fig 8.6 (page 89) as Route 10 of 10 routes. All 10 routes appear to have equal weight, merit and importance attached to them. It appears as a purple line on a scale too small to detect the line of the actual route. Indeed, the actual route is not specified.

So, what exactly is the Had-Alt? Is it a single route as indicated on the map, albeit too small to quantify or analyse? Or is it a more general, amorphous area of multiple minor roads that cut through villages and housing estates?

Moreover, why is it called the Had-Alt and what is it an alternative to? If, as one suspects, the A57, then why would you want traffic to rat-run rather than use the A57, other than to avoid triggering the Dinting AQMA?

Without there being some sort of statement or clarification as to what the full route of the Had-Alt consists of, how can we ascertain what we are dealing with here? How do we know what is the actual route or routes?

Consequently, how do we know if the modelling has covered the entirety of the suggested Had-Alt route? As an example, traffic flows at the eastern end of the model (A57 Link Roads TR010034 – 6.5 Environmental Statement- Appendix 1) shows AADT DM at 5,150 v 5,750 for DS 2025, which suggests it may be part of the Had-Alt, along with Dinting Rd AADT DM 3,100 v 4,500 for DS in 2025.

The continuation of the latter route through Hallmeadow Rd, Old Glossop, joining the A57 via Manor Park Rd, is not even indicated on the map, nor is Hadfield Rd, even though it would be an obvious way of reaching Cemetery Rd.

Once planned development is complete, urbanising Dinting Rd and making it a thoroughly unattractive route, then Padfield village becomes part of the 'alternative' picture, which is also currently beyond the scope of the modelling.

By now it has become fairly evident that the diversion plans for the Had-Alt have been somewhat deliberately and rather foolishly kept under wraps by NH, to avoid massive public anger and a backlash against what is already an unpopular Scheme. In fact, they have been reduced to a mere two paragraphs in the Traffic Assessment Report.

Lack of Modelling/Disenfranchisement

It is clear that modelling journeys in the BBA document should have been in the public domain from the outset and available for the public to comment on at the consultation stage.

Keeping people in the dark through the absence of these modelling journeys has prejudiced matters by denying residents in the affected areas, such as Hadfield, Upper Dinting, parts of Glossop, Old Glossop and Padfield, a proper understanding of how building the Scheme will affect them.

They have been unable to form an opinion, or at least an accurate informed opinion, as to whether the Scheme is beneficial or detrimental to them and how it will impact their lives.

In effect, they have been disenfranchised and excluded from any meaningful part in the consultation process. Perhaps this was the intention of NH all along. Perhaps this explains why they never presented the '**Routes To Market**' document to the Inquiry at any stage. It does seem a glaring omission.

NH must have known which streets were to be used in their modelling. By not naming the 'Had-Alt' or specifying what it is or isn't, they have deliberately misled the public by creating an amorphous entity which paints an incomplete picture that cannot be scrutinised.

This disenfranchisement of thousands of local residents, who have no idea that the Scheme is about to make their traffic problems worse rather than better, combined with the burying, obfuscation and

actual non-publication of critical traffic data is, I believe, so serious that the Scheme should now be referred back to the consultation stage.

At that consultation, traffic data should be fully and freely available and set out in a meaningful way as to be understandable to the lay person.

Alternatives

Finally, I would like to make a brief comment with respect to Item 3 entitled 'Transport Networks & Traffic, Alternatives, Access' at last Wednesday's session of ISH2.

I would hope and assume that all parties submitting evidence to the Examination have the common aim of improving the traffic situation in and around Glossopdale, as well as advancing the Scheme's aims of improving connectivity, congestion, reliability and safety of strategic routes.

However, the only proposal that appears to be on the table for discussion at this stage is a rather poor Hobson's choice – namely, the A57 Link Roads Scheme, which links to nothing, appears to do nothing other than move the blockage at the end of the M67 to halfway down Mottram Moor and which has very little local support.

I was then, a little surprised that under Item 3 there was no meaningful discussion of Alternatives to the Scheme. I was able to mention that I thought there were better, simpler and more cost-effective alternatives, such as the Mottram Gyratory Flow. PDNPA also mentioned that in the past they had been in discussion about a tunnel solution but that was the sum total of parlance on the topic of Alternatives and I had rather hoped for more.

Particularly so given the fact that the case for the Scheme doesn't even seem to meet its own criteria. A key component of connectivity is a reduction in journey times for which there appears to be little or no proof. DCC in their written submission asked for evidence of shorter journey times. I second that comment and further suggest, the very fact that NH expect traffic to divert off the A57, is a tacit admission of a slowdown.

Similarly, NH acknowledge that the Scheme is likely to draw in more traffic to the area, hence their reason for being less than upfront with the data., hardly suggestive that it will be a solution to congestion & quite possibly the opposite. As there is a direct link between traffic volume and accidents, it is also difficult to understand how the Scheme would improve safety.

On every measure the Scheme fails to meet its own criteria and with a signalised roundabout halfway down the Moor why will it not simply cause a new blockage that would almost immediately bring forth calls for further road building, in the form of a fully-fledged Mottram-Tintwistle Bypass (Motorway)?

Tameside MBC have always seen the Link Roads as a strategy to achieve exactly that and their representatives talk openly about it as a stepping stone to a full 'bypass' that would ultimately threaten the very existence of the Peak District National Park itself.

As a standalone project the Link Roads Scheme does not stack up, represents poor value for money, in terms of what it will do for the area and looks very much like the Glossop Spur/Mottram-Tintwistle

Bypass scheme of 2007-8 that failed at the Public Inquiry, except that this time, there is an attempt to build it in reverse.

Stephen Bagshaw

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