

Bryan G Norman, B.Sc. (Est Man.) F.R.I.C.S
Summary of Submission to Planning Inspectorate
Ref A303, Sparkford to Ilchester Dualling

In addition to my own views, I also represent the views of the Parish Councils of Queen Camel, West Camel and Sparkford together with Hazlegrove School, relating to –

1. The design of Hazlegrove junction.
2. The omission of a parallel road.

With due respect to Mr Julian Boswall's legal opinion, my evidence shows that based on facts, the two changes proposed are relatively minor variations and can easily be accommodated within the Planning Inspectorate's timetable and pose no threat to the commencement of construction in Spring 2020.

The changes suggested do not involve any basic alteration to the 6K of the main carriageway and in the principle design changes could each be completed within two weeks.

Furthermore as these changes take place well within or very close to the DCO boundary for which the environmental information is largely available and the estimate of completing any impact revisions is approximately six weeks.

The net cost of the new construction of these minor variations is only £5M each (excluding contractor's preliminaries etc.), furthermore, there will be substantial direct savings in the region of £9M plus further substantial indirect savings of similar magnitude. This represents a tiny proportion of the estimated £171M total cost.

I therefore, urge the Planning Inspectorate to encourage Highways England to critically consider my detailed evidence with a view to submitting DCO revisions which would have the full support of these Parish Councils and Hazlegrove School and not risk having their application refused on planning and particularly environmental grounds.

To broadly summarise the points I raise relating to the two items:-

1. The much simplified design of the junction substantially reduces the land used within the Registered Park from 2.6 Hectares (H) to 0.9H and uses lower ground. It avoids creating 1 million kilometres of unnecessary travel per annum and grid-lock at peak periods caused by the failure of the existing design to take account of the schools traffic impact. It is, therefore an environmental improvement of considerable importance and will provide a substantial direct savings in construction in the order of £9M, plus a further £7M indirect savings.
2. The early construction of the missing section of 0.9K would enable all traffic to be separated from the construction works and allow bulk excavation material to be moved via the direct route of the new carriageway, on or via the unused sections of the old A303, without the need to construct 'haul roads', which would more than balance the cost of the additional road works.

Further substantial indirect savings are to be gained by largely avoiding the conflict of construction traffic with a very busy through route, thus reducing risk and keeping businesses open. Most importantly the convenience to A303 users would be substantially improved as will the contractor's working arrangements.

This is the only mitigation measure that will be believed to be a 'best endeavour' to reduce rat-running through local villages, which is a serious problem.