

From: [Les Stevens](#)
To: [A303 Sparkford To Ilchester](#)
Cc: [Les Stevens](#)
Subject: Deadline 7 Submission on behalf of the Parish Councils of Queen Camel, West Camel and Sparkford.
Date: 28 May 2019 10:02:52
Attachments: [A303 Joint Response Final 22_5_19 Deadline 7.pdf](#)

Dear Sir / Madam,

Please find attached a joint Deadline 7 submission on behalf of the three Parish Councils of Queen Camel, West Camel and Sparkford.

Kind regards.

Les Stevens
Clerk to West Camel Parish Council

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**JOINT SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF THE PARISH COUNCILS OF QUEEN CAMEL, WEST
CAMEL AND SPARKFORD – DEADLINE 7**

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STATEMENT FOR ISSUE SPECIFIC HEARING 23RD MAY 2019

OVERVIEW

The three Parish Councils of Queen Camel, West Camel and Sparkford represent the majority of the local residents along the length of the scheme have all engaged with the consultation, design and DCO processes in a positive and supportive manner. We want to achieve the best overall outcome for our communities and we recognise that the dualling of this section of the A303 is potentially of great benefit to South Somerset and the wider South West.

It should be clear from our previous statements and submissions to the Examining Authority that the scheme proposed will clearly have a negative effect on the businesses and communities immediately alongside the development and we do not believe the local impact has ever been properly considered by the Applicant. Indeed, the Applicant cannot evidence any efforts to demonstrate that the primary concerns of the Parishes have been considered in any systematic and logical manner and has failed to evidence even that approaches to MOD have taken place, in defiance of direct requests from the Examining Authority. The Applicant has likewise failed to evidence that alternatives suggested by the three Parishes have ever been properly considered. Certainly The Applicant's assertions that these were rejected for either financial or access reasons has not been supported by any tangible evidence.

Once again, the three Parishes joint concerns are:

- The convoluted design of the Hazlegrove Junction that increases journey times, destroys a disproportionate amount of Hazlegrove registered park and gardens and causes increased traffic volumes through Sparkford Village.
- The lack of a Local Parallel Road (LPR) to alleviate traffic issues during construction and provide community connectivity and access to local businesses over the longer term. The Parishes submit that significant savings can be achieved through the early construction of LPR negating the need for the planned haulage routes and Bailey bridge. The retention of LPR should also allow the local businesses along this route to survive and continue to provide much needed services to the local communities.
- The ill-considered junction placement at Downhead that encourages through-traffic to 'rat-run' through West Camel. This junction is completely unnecessary should the LPR be constructed as all access would be provided via this route. Likewise traffic will use this junction to avoid the inevitable delays through the convoluted Hazlegrove junction.

We submit that The Applicant should be compelled to consider properly the local impacts of this development before any construction is approved by the Examining Authority.

A more detailed assessment is included on the following pages.

Consultation – Unfortunately, we now look back at the highly expensive and protracted ‘Consultation’ phase and suspect that what actually took place was a ‘box ticking Information exercise’ with no real intention of taking into account the views of local people.

Retrospectively, the only changes made to the scheme have been driven by ‘stakeholders’ who had the ability to demand change e.g. DIO and to a lesser extent SCC.

We now believe that the detailed design, presented at the DCO phase was, in all probability already by the final stage of consultation in ‘tablets of stone’ and HE became entrenched in their views at a time when they could have listened and still openly considered other options.

Transparency – the Consultation and ongoing debate haven’t, to our joint perception, been open or transparent, with much vital costing data being withheld and key evidence of communication with the DIO mysteriously becoming ‘unavailable’ due to its ‘sensitive’ nature.

Local Parallel Road (LPR) – we believe that jointly Mr Bryan Norman and Mr Keith Tingey, backed by Consulting Engineers Fairhurst, we have provided sufficient evidence to support the veracity and efficacy of our alternative proposal for a **Local Parallel Road**. The advantages are numerous and would benefit everyone, namely –

Overall provide **cost savings** to the tax payer and better value for money.

Less adverse **environmental impact** (no haul routes through open country).

More logical, easier construction schedule (as provided by Mr Keith Tingey many months ago).

Improved experience for A303 road users during the construction phase

A much **reduced Socio/Economic impact** on local businesses, farms and Local Communities.

Improved **local access** for land owners, MOD, Local Businesses, NMUs and agricultural traffic.

Future proof the scheme in readiness for the inevitable **upgrade to ‘Expressway Status’**

At ISH 5 on 14th May 2019, H.E. stated that they would need to withdraw their DCO in order to re-plan their current scheme to include a LPR and that this would take around 12 months to complete.

We respectfully suggest, that having waited in excess of 30 years for the dualling of this section of the A303, a further delay of a mere 12 months is more than acceptable to deliver the overwhelming advantages mentioned above and detailed in our earlier submissions.

Hazlegrove Junction – As mentioned above, the three Parish Councils, working with Mr Bryan Norman and the Consulting Engineers Fairhurst have also challenged the design of the Hazlegrove Junction and produced alternative proposals that would deliver substantial benefits, namely –

Deliver cost saving of approx. £9M over HE design – better use of public funds

Reduced land-take from the Hazlegrove House RPG

More Eco-friendly design in terms of reducing journeys by 600,000 km per year (152 tonnes of CO2 emissions!).

Improved safety for NMUs using a shorter, separate underpass

No need to light the shorter underpasses which in effect become bridges.

Reduced traffic diverting through West Camel as drivers avoid an over complicated junction.

Reduced diverting traffic through Sparkford High Street as drivers avoid an over complicated junction.

Better protection of local employment at Sparkford Services as commuters find access less complicated to call at these services.

Fairhurst Design Engineers consider these amendments to represent substantial improvements over the current H.E. design.

As with the LPR mentioned earlier, a 12 month delay for re-design work would be a small price to pay for all the improvements detailed here and in our earlier submissions.

In Conclusion – The three Parish Councils have consistently supported the need to dual this section of the A303 and have sought to work constructively with the Applicant and their Consulting Design Engineers, Mott-MacDonald.

However, the design and Consultation process has not been the reciprocal process we believed it should have been (or indeed was intended to be), with the Applicant becoming entrenched in their inflexible design concept very early on.

We note that other sections of the A303 improvement scheme linking the A303 at Amesbury to the M5 at Taunton are running behind schedule. Therefore as there will be no overall timing impact in getting the full benefits from this major improvement scheme we request that the Recommendation of the Examining Authority is that the DCO be withdrawn and resubmitted. The resubmission should reflect the design point raised above and should deliver substantial cost savings and improved socio/economic benefits to both the local and wider economy.

Les Stevens

On behalf of the Parish Councils of Queen Camel, West Camel and Sparkford.