Wansford Parish Council

Deadline 5 Submission

Comments on Document 9.20 Applicant's Written Summary of Oral Submissions at Hearings

A47 Wansford to Sutton Dualling

The applicants written summary of oral submissions at hearings raise a number of issues as set out below:

Ref 3.1 Scheduled Monument

There has been repeated reference to the significance of blank spaced in the 2017 geophysical survey. The survey technique used shows up areas where there has been excavation and infilling or burning and it also shows any metallic items that may be present. The ground in the area of the Scheduled monument is free draining, alkaline and well aerated. This means that no cloth, leather or soft tissue remains will have survived (unlike at say Flag Fen where items have been preserved in acidic saturated mud). The only thing likely to be missed by the survey is pottery and this will have been destroyed by the ploughing (note the pottery fragments scattered over other parts of the site).

The Applicant drew a parallel between the spaces in the Scheduled Monument that showed no evidence of features with the space between Buckingham Palace and the Victoria Monument. The area of the Scheduled Monument is a field that has been extensively ploughed. We have no knowledge of any past ceremonial use and even if there was, it has left no trace of its existence. The space between Buckingham Palace and the Victoria Monument is frequently used for large ceremonial functions as well as being a busy traffic route. The comparison is completely spurious and is irrelevant to the discussion.

The Applicant knows perfectly well that there was review of the status and boundaries of the Scheduled Monument. The Applicant has copies of the documents that were submitted to this review. These very clearly show that there was a move to change the shape of the Scheduled Monument. The outline of the proposed area was submitted to the Examining Authority by Wansford Parish Council at Deadline 4.

Ref 3.2 Scheduled Monument - possible alternative alignment

In this response the Applicant states that the test for any alignment is whether it does less than substantial harm to the Scheduled Monument. What they have never explained is why they did not apply this test to the alternative alignment when it was suggested in 2018. Instead Highways England stated at the time that it was their policy not to encroach on Scheduled Monuments regardless of the consequences. Paragraph 2 of the ISH2 response indicates the use of a different test which is also not the one set out in the legislation.

Ref 9.1 Alignment of road

The Applicant spoke at some length about the National Highways experience of building roads but chose to ignore that National Highways and their predecessors have been involved in several cases where instability has caused cost overruns, extended programmes and high maintenance costs. The embankments on the M11/A14 junction are just one example of this. Similarly, the Applicant spoke about Galliford Try's experience of road building. They too have had geotechnical problems notably on the approaches to the Second Forth Crossing. The simple fact is that it is not sensible to deliberately build a road embankment on a slope that is known to be unstable when there is a viable alternative.