

## **M54 to M6 Link Road M54 - National Infrastructure Planning**

Further to my letter of 18 May 2020, registering as an Interested Party, I would like to make the following more detailed representations on behalf of my constituents:

In broad terms, I welcome the proposed M54 to M6 Link Road. Traffic levels, congestion and resultant air pollution along the existing A460 between M6 Jct 11, Laney Green and the M54, Jc 1, have increased to unacceptable levels during peak periods.

I have previously met with Highways England Officers to discuss my concerns on this highway scheme. This reflected the numerous concerns from residents in my constituency at Featherstone, Hilton, Shareshill and Wedges Mills, regarding the negative effect from traffic, noise and air pollution. Residents also feel that the proposed scheme may have an adverse impact on their quality of life as well as affecting the distinct identity of these villages.

I would ask that the views of local residents, Shareshill Parish Council and Hilton Parish Council, are given serious consideration during this process. In particular:-

- Concerns raised on the roads proximity to existing domestic dwellings, noise; air and light pollution.
- Exact figures are provided on noise pollution which will have a negative effect on properties of the Parishes of Featherstone, Shareshill and Hilton due to their close proximity to the M54, Junction 1.
- Vibration from the volume of traffic.
- Change of street scene and loss of amenity including views to Hilton Park.
- The close proximity of the road nearest to the residents of Dark Lane/Park Road and the scope for an eastward realignment.
- Additional tree planting required north of Hilton Lane to the M6 Jct 11.
- Continued access to public footpaths which may require the provision of a 'green bridge'.
- Loss of flora and fauna.
- The lack of a weight restriction on the existing A460 at Featherstone and Hilton.
- Additional mitigation for the Hilton Green environmental project.
- A detailed assessment of the affect the proposal will have on the Ancient Woodland situated in Dark Lane.
- Confirmation of the impact on any designated heritage assets and their settings, as requested by Historic England in their letter, 1 February 2019, on the PINS - Scoping Opinion, February 2019.
- Confirmation that an assessment has been carried out of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) with regard to transport emissions and the impact of air quality upon public health, as requested by Public Health England, in their letter of 11 February 2019, on the PINS - Scoping Opinion, February 2019.

The previous scheme included a direct link with the M6Toll, which would have taken through traffic off local roads and involved a series of grade separated link roads bypassing the M6 Junction 11/Laney Green. Regrettably, these have now been deleted, due to the withdrawal of private sector funding.

While the current scheme does achieve a main objective of diverting traffic from the existing A460 through Featherstone, all traffic will now need to pass through the Laney Green M6 junction 11, albeit it will be enlarged. I understand that passive provision has been made for a future link with the M6T, although this is not part of the current proposal. As such the current scheme may not provide the relief to the Laney Green M6 Jc11, as originally envisaged.

Unresolved issues include how local and long distance HGV traffic will be controlled post construction, from travelling along the existing A460 through Featherstone, for commercial purposes, such as access to fuel stations or the HGV Vehicle Testing Station.

In addition, residents at Hilton have previously expressed concern on the proximity of the proposed road to existing elderly person residential properties at Dark Lane and are rightly concerned over noise and air pollution issues. From Highways England's visualisation flythrough video, while it appears to show some wooden fencing and tree planting on this sensitive boundary, it is not apparent that an earth bund is to be provided to provide more effective noise mitigation, which I consider should be investigated including an eastward realignment of the proposed road.

More recently, approval has been given for the West Midlands Interchange at M6 Jc12/A5, and HGV control measures from this development approval will need to be factored in, including an up to date projection of the cumulative effect of traffic generated by the Strategic Rail Hub and the new nearby Retail Park.

I trust that the above matters will be given full consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Gavin Williamson MP