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Monday 8th April 2024

Fao: M3 Junction 9 Improvement Project Case Team
National Infrastructure Planning
Email: m3junction9@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Interested Party Reference number: 20036736

M3 Junction 9 Improvement

Hampshire Chamber of Commerce (including its Planning & Transport Business Strategy Group and Winchester & District Business Strategy Group) wish to support the work to alleviate the delay and congestion caused to both the north and southbound carriageways at the A34/M3 Junction 9. This has long disrupted our region and given the quantum of cruise passengers, visitors to the New Forest and South Coast and the immense amount of freight that uses the A34 trunk road and M3 a difficult and often delayed journey and experience of our wonderful region. This has had a considerable knock-on effect to our region's economy. So it will be positive to have this work completed.

However, we are concerned at the cost of it.

The routing of some of the diversions through the city of Winchester as well as the timing of such diversions given the proximity to the city centre and events that may be taking place – not simply the Christmas period – could provide a significant challenge to the region. There is a significant quantum of cruise passengers and freight that use this route and it would appear that an alternative provision should need to be made for these groups perhaps. Due to the roads in Winchester being rather narrow including a number of fairly sharp corners we do not wish there to be HGV's and buses diverted through Winchester as the roads just would not cope with such vehicles.

Can we ask what is being done and has a user group working group been set up – if so, can the Chamber please be involved?

It is also important to bear in mind the impact that this will have on travel patterns. Whilst at the presentation it was suggested that there would be no increase in travel time, despite narrow lanes and 50mph running, this is not the case on the recent works on the M27 where travel times have increased twofold for journeys through the affected sections at rush hours – a trip that took 20 minutes now takes 40-45 minutes. We would ask for monitoring of this on both the M27 now and M3 before and after the works as well as publication of the statistics on the M27 works immediately to demonstrate the truth or otherwise in the statement of no increase in travel time.

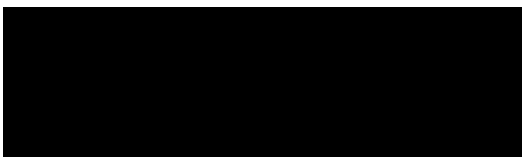
Staying with the M27, the work to the M3 will be taking place at the same time as works for overlay of the M27, as well as works at Junction 8 for strengthening purposes, the new Junction 10 for Welborne and new and increased emergency refuges. The speaker on the M3 works was aware of the overlay works but not of the other plans that will disrupt travel throughout our region. These all need to be planned and coordinated more effectively together. It does not seem that that is happening at present.

I imagine that there is not much likelihood of people using the train to travel east west instead due to the travel times being prohibitive between Portsmouth and Southampton, but in terms of the economic impact that all of these cumulative projects will have together, along with local recent and ongoing roadworks on the A27 (the only other East / West route in the region) we would like to see the report on the economic impact with cumulative impacts assessed in advance of these works being given the green light as this could be significant and needs to be controlled or businesses supported and the region given additional government support.

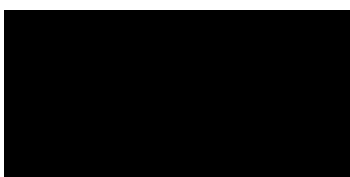
We would ask for the same information to be provided to the Chamber from those managing the works on the M27 and an ability to feed into the programming and also the consenting for any of those works that have yet to come on line.

As we state at the beginning, these works are fundamental to our future economic success, but they need to be managed carefully or any positive benefit that comes from these will have been lost before they are even completed.

Yours faithfully



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Chief Executive/Executive Chair
Hampshire Chamber of Commerce



Gavin Hall
Chair of the Planning & Transport Business Strategy Group
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