

As a concerned resident of Cowley I am very disappointed with the lack of consideration and standard of consultation that has afforded to our village. Cowley is one of the closest villages to the proposed Option 30 route, however no consultation meetings were held in our village despite villages and centres much further afield benefiting from such consultation days. There are several venues within our village where a meeting could have been held for a day (Cowley Manor, Girl Guides Centre, the function room of the Green Dragon Inn).

I attended two consultation meetings at venues outside of Cowley and from these it was clearly apparent that it was a consultation in name only, everything was strongly biased towards how great the proposed Option 30 was and that it WILL be the chosen option, despite still being in the consultation stage. Presentation of Option 12 felt to be a token effort and appeared to be down played by Highways staff. The tone of the language used by the consultants at the meetings was all negatively biased for Option 12 and any positives quickly dismissed.

No consultant at either meeting was able to agree or clearly answer questions I had around the suitability of the Cowley Wood Lane as a viable route into the village, consideration of traffic levels on the A436 for rush-hour traffic, or if vehicle access would remain open from the village of Cowley out via Stockwell (I still don't think I clearly know if I will be able to drive out of the village this way or through Cowley Woods).

Further to this, the online Webchat consultation on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 also failed to change my feeling that Cowley was being overlooked with it taking a further 3 days for somebody to come back to me with answers to basic questions concerning access and rat-running through Cowley.

My biggest objection and concern about the Option30 route is the inconceivable and unnecessary destruction of the Cotswold countryside. The route proposed cuts through everything that is quintessentially 'Cotswolds', rolling sheep grazed farmland, ancient woodland, SSI's etc which can never be replaced. I cannot understand how this loss of countryside, habitat and nature can be considered given the UK & global drive to protect such environments and reduce our impact on nature.

I'm in total agreement that improvements need to be made to the missing link section of road, but there is plenty of scope to improve and widen the existing carriageway and make better use of what countryside we have already taken without causing so much unreversible and unnecessary destruction.

Having studied the various A417 publications from the Highways Authority I would be grateful if the following questions could be put forward to them for comment and consideration:

Q1) Can the ExA be appraised as to why adjusted BCR for Option 12 is 0.68 and Option 30 is 1.04, when Option 30 most likely cost was greater, and logically the efficiency of the journey for the road user would be roughly similar for both Options, costs or benefits to the environment would be much greater with Option 30, and the impact of accidents and road works for both Options would be largely the same?

*(Ref: Economic analysis TR010056-000602-7.9 Technical Appraisal Report (February 2018) Page 15)*

Q2) The difference in adjusted BCR between the 2 options comes down to the perceived Economic Efficiency, Reliability Benefits and Wider Economic Benefits. Can the ExA be appraised as to how the economic efficiency for Option 30 can be on average 65% greater than Option 12, reliability benefits are 30% better and wider economic benefits 57% better, considering both options are about the same length, carrying the same volume and type of traffic?

*(Ref: TR010056-000602-7.9 Technical Appraisal Report (February 2018) Page 146 Table 9.2)*

Q3) There are several safety concerns raised in respect of the overall alignment of Option 30. If a mitigation measure was a reduced speed limit, can the ExA be appraised of what impacts this would have on the overall journey times, and would they then be of the same order as Option 12?

*(Ref: TR010056-000602-7.9 Technical Appraisal Report (February 2018) Page 162 Para 10.1.89-92)*

Q4) The report states for Option 30, a significant reduction in excess material has been achieved, above that which was identified for Option 12. Option 30 had 80% surplus material volume compared to 90% for Option 12 before revised engineering assumptions. Can the ExA be appraised as to whether revised engineering assumptions on structural features achieve significant net reduction in cost for Option 12?

*(Ref: Economic Assessment TR010056-000608-7.4 Scheme Assessment Report (March 2019) Page 10)*

Q5) The Scheme Assessment Report (SAR) states that 'Option 30 would divert the strategic road network away from the Cotswolds escarpment'. Can the ExA be appraised as to what the impact, if any, Option 12 would cause on the escarpment over and above what is there now with the current A417. In addition, can the ExA be appraised as to what design measures could be undertaken to mitigate any perceived impacts on the escarpment, caused by Option 12.

*(Ref: The recommended preferred route TR010056-000608-7.4 Scheme Assessment Report (March 2019) Page 12)*

Q6) The estimated cost figures given in table 4.2 show that Option 30 was £485million based on Q1 2016 figures and it is repeatedly stated that there is a project budget of £250-500million. Allowing for inflation and the various design changes that have been specified since the consultations, please could the ExA be appraised of the expected costs based on 2021/22 estimates and if the £500 million cost ceiling is still valid.

*(Ref: The recommended preferred route TR010056-000608-7.4 Scheme Assessment Report (March 2019) Page 81)*

Q7) The A436 towards Severn Springs carries a significant weight of traffic and is a vital route towards Oxford and the M40. There appears to be little data available for traffic volume on this route. The proposed Option 30 would make this traffic climb uphill to the Birdlip junction then back down again (approximately 2km plus elevation gain). Please could the ExA be appraised of what effects will this have to journey times for this specific route, vehicle emissions and if this factored into the benefit cost ratio. Please could this exercise also be completed and compared for Option 12.

*(Ref: The recommended preferred route TR010056-000608-7.4 Scheme Assessment Report (March 2019))*