

I live in Cowley, and I feel strongly that our views have NOT been asked for by Highways England, nor have they been represented by our Parish Council.

I am very concerned that Highways England appear to have totally ignored our village when it comes to consultations. Yes, I am aware that they held some public events in Birdlip, Elkestone and the National Star, but WHY have they decided they do not need to hold any here in Cowley! We are, I think, the only village to be impacted negatively by the proposed route. Surely any public relations expert would have pinpointed Cowley as one of the most important villages to visit and to consult with. I am dismayed by this and really it raises alarm bells as to why Highways England did not want to visit us!

Question: Can the ExA be appraised as to why it was deemed unnecessary to hold a public exhibition within the one community most affected by this proposal?

Question: Can the ExA be confident that the views of the residents of Cowley have been adequately consulted by Highways England?

The Parish Council does not look after our interests either. We have put together our written representations as requested by the Examiner, only to be told by the Chairman of the Parish Council that they will not be submitted – WHY? I thought this was a democratic process we were going through, and that the Examination was there to make sure everyone had their say in the proposal – not for Cowley!

Question: Can the ExA be appraised as to why the Parish Council felt it was right to prevent the written representations submitted by the residents of Cowley from reaching the Inspectorate?

Question: Can the ExA be confident that the views of the residents of Cowley are being passed on to the Inspectorate?

I am not convinced that Option 30 has been 'landscape led' at all. It has clearly been led by the desire to have a speed limit of 70mph! WHY? The weather can be atrocious up on that stretch of road and it just does not make sense increasing the speed. I am not convinced that the weather data that Highways England will have used in the design, accurately reflects the conditions we all know exist. It would be wrong if anyone suggested that the weather conditions are normal up there – they are everything but normal!

Question: Can the ExA be appraised as to whether the meteorological data used in the design, accurately reflects the known weather conditions that effect that area. I believe Highways England have referred to the area as having a ‘volatile microclimate’ – an understatement!

I am very conscious of the environment, and as such interested in the impact the scheme will have upon it. Also, I am acutely aware of the impact the pandemic has had on our ways or working, and the closure of the Honda plant in Swindon. The latter I assume will greatly reduce the ‘just in time’ deliveries that would routinely have used the route, and the former will have reduced the number of people commuting. Vehicles and their emissions could be reduced if we reduced the speed limit - I believe research suggest that 7% of car CO2 emissions (1.4 Mt C) could be saved if a maximum limit of 50 mph were imposed. Are we not at a stage where we need to check as to whether ‘the situation has changed’, and whether the proposed scheme is actually the answer to yesterday's problem!

Question: Can the ExA be appraised as to whether any studies have been carried out to assess the need for the scheme in the light of the pandemic? Is the design data they used still relevant today? Could we have an environmentally better solution by reducing the speed limit to 50mph over the complete scheme, whilst at the same time preserving traffic flow?

Question: Can the ExA be appraised as to why there is a perceived need for a design speed limit of 70mph?