

Leckhampton with Warden Hill Parish Council represents the southern area of Cheltenham closest to the Air Balloon junction.

We are well aware of the A417's terrible reputation as a dangerous road and believe most residents support action to reduce the risk of death or injury on these roads and that this was a much more significant public concern than the 5 minute improvements to journey time forecast even at peak time (Scheme Assessment report p126). The preferred Option 30 was widely supported locally as preferable in environmental impact and road safety terms to the alternative surface road Option 12. But we are also aware that the shortlisted tunnel Options 21, 24, 29 and 30 shortlisted were all dismissed in 2017 on 'value for money' grounds and all exceeded the cost range for the scheme set by HM Treasury (Scheme Assessment Report 2019 (para 4.6.1, p80). But attitudes both to the environment and to public spending have moved on significantly since 2017 so a very thorough testing of whether the negative impacts of Option 30 are really justified is now necessary.

We are particularly concerned at the forecast 51% increase in traffic through Leckhampton (route ID 4) by 2041 compared to the 'do minimum' scenario and the consequent impact on air quality as well as congestion. We are concerned that the projected improvements in road safety from the scheme properly account for this significant increase in local traffic and the likely increase in local accidents that could result.

We are concerned at the projected 902,895 additional tonnes of CO2 equivalent compared to the 'do minimum' scenario over an assumed 60 year life cycle at a time of climate emergency and the estimated 20-25% loss in biodiversity projected from the scheme, especially in the light of developing national policy on carbon reduction and biodiversity net gain.

And we would like the concerns expressed about ecology and wildlife, the landscape impact on the AONB and the impact on the scheduled ancient monuments in immediate proximity to the scheme expressed in other representations, particularly those from Natural England, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, the Woodland Trust and the Council for British Archaeology, to be fully explored in the examination.