



Planning Inspectorate RE missing link A417 -TR010056

Interested Party Submission

14 December 2021

In reply to The Examining Authority's written questions and requests for information (ExQ1) Issued on 16 November 2021 I note as follows :

In general :

As well as living here we are a local business and as such have not been directly consulted at any time about the affects of the changes to the A417 on our livelihood. We have attended the public consultation and have left our contact details for updates and have received none directly. As far as we are concerned we have been looking to see Option 12 implemented from an early stage as it seems to be the best from the points of view of cost, for its lessened ecological impact, climate change implications and value for money. It would appear from the outside that option 30 is being pushed forward without due attention to the changed world we now live in and that option 12 benefits are simply being accrued to option 30 without any basis. With climate and ecology being the most weighty considerations for any project how can carving a 4/5 lane carriageway through an untouched AONB be seen as more advantageous than adding 2 lanes to the existing infrastructure. The cost of 4/5 lanes (option30) must be more than 2 lanes (option 12) and the 4/5 lanes also has the added cost of having to take apart and reinstate the old road left behind. As a resident of Cowley we have not been properly brought on board regarding this development and our views have not been properly assimilated into the discussion. I hope that at this point they can be weighed properly and Option 12 considered as the best route for this development.

More specifically

Ref 1.1.6 (a)

In light of COP 26 and the recent govt policy changes regarding environmental impact the options appraisal has not been sufficiently robust as to the benefits of Option 12. Option 30 has been pushed forward regardless of the environmental damage to an AONB.

Ref 1.1.7 (f)

The 'land-scape led' idea of Option 12 which is a good thing has been conveniently utilised to try to promote Option 30. The destruction of large swathes of virgin grassland, the co2 sink damage, and habitat and wildlife destruction by putting in 4/5 carriageways and an extra feeder road (Option 30) as opposed to 2 carriageways (Option12) are being glossed over.

Ref 1.1.14

Cop 26 and the implications of climate change that have finally come to the forefront in Govt thinking must now be given more gravity than had been previously allotted to them. The landscape lead on this project must be the top priority. As soon as you factor in this way Option 12 will be a far more environmentally progressive outcome, and no doubt a better financial option.

Ref 1.1.16 and 1.1.33

Any change to the road layout in this scheme would drastically improve the traffic flow and safety of the road. The Path to Net

Zero page 76 points to stopping all road building as one of a suite of areas to help attain Net Zero therefore as agreement is almost unanimous that this road section is no longer fit for purpose would it not be better to have only one new carriageway being built (Option 12) as opposed to 2 Carriageways (Option 30). The path to net zero also points to lower speed as a climate benefit. Option 12 would achieve this and still way outstrip the current journey times.

Ref 1.3.2 (a) and 1.3.28 and 1.3.29

The arguments for and against the dislocating and then relocating of wild animals have not reached a provable scientific conclusion, research is still ongoing. The perceived success varies from species to species and there is much doubt that the end aims are achievable or even monitorable. Option 30 will involve far more movement/relocation of species because of the path it takes. Utilising Option 12 will keep disruption and human interference to a minimum and leave wildlife undisturbed, which is its best chance of survival. In this area we have 15 species of bat including the rare Brandt Bat and Great Horse Shoe Bat which are endangered. The NBN Atlas shows there are 3270 different species, flora and fauna in the area. With Dormice (extremely difficult to move) Owls, European water voles, bank voles, pole cats, etc etc.

The biodiversity surveys and their findings that should be in place to show the current situation are not evident and if they exist are very hard to find. Where are they? Any of the proposed changes and mitigations for Option 12 and Option 30 would need to be as assessed against them as a benchmark for this development and its consequences and mitigations. Have these assessments against both routes been made and where are they?

Ref 1.3.3 and 1.3.4

The 'addition' of the calcareous grassland proposed in Option 30 is a gross misrepresentation. The plan calls for 2 new carriageways to be put through the middle of virgin grassland that already exists and is a major carbon sink as well as an established wildlife area and an AONB. Option 12 puts only 1 new carriageway and skirts the edge of farmland removing a far smaller volume of land and not interfering with old calcareous grassland. How can the two be calculated to equate to the same gain when it is well known that old undisturbed land/trees way outperform new land trees in the carbon race we are in.

Ref 1.3.5 and 1.3.6

The wildlife crossing have been used to beguile people into supporting Option 30. From their first inception they have been altered, minimised and moved in later iterations of Option 30. However in Option 12 the wildlife crossings were part of the landscape led approach. The main thrust was to give a new crossing point from Crickey Hill to Barrow Wake for wildlife. This would be a major improvement to the whole area and join currently disjointed parts of an AONB. This is what generated a great deal of support for the scheme. Because of the layout of the terrain where the road effectively passes down a valley just below the current air balloon roundabout then this original 'bridge' would have been able to support a much deeper topsoil and be far wider so as to be able to meet its construction criteria of allowing wildlife undisturbed crossing to land currently unavailable as a continuum.

Option 30 without any consultation has moved the wildlife bridge to higher ground where it sits above the surface topography and made it narrower where it will be impossible to ensure it will not succumb to climate variations that will render it effectively useless. It will also bring humans and wildlife into closer proximity where wildlife will not choose to go. The safety fencing and the road itself for option 30 will effectively create a huge island of land between the new 4/5 carriageway road and the escarpment that will be unavailable to wildlife to transit in and out. Option 12 does not create this island of lost land.

Ref 1.8.14

The proposed route for Option 30 cuts through the middle of a very tranquil and quiet part of the AONB. This tranquillity is the case even with the proximity of the current A417. Putting option 30 in will destroy this environment and its tranquillity whereas Option 12 will keep all the footpaths and roadways on a far smaller footprint and keep them in an area they already inhabit and leave land that already has a huge biodiversity and tranquillity undisturbed.

Many thanks

Yours Sincerely

James Hamilton