

Issue Specific Hearing 2 - 27th January 2022.

Agenda Item 8 - Transport

Sir,

The ExA is aware of the specific traffic issues in the Parish of Cowley and Birdlip and the surrounding areas from the responses we have already given at Deadline 1. However I would like to provide some further context to support the response from Cowley and Birdlip Parish Council

You have already seen the evidence we provided at Deadline 1, specifically our responses to ExQ1 question 1.11.26 and you would have seen the many pictures and videos that illustrate the misery that the villages of Birdlip and Cowley (and also the village of Brimpsfield) endure as traffic leaves the A417 at either the Cowley or Birdlip junctions to avoid the daily periods of congestion.

During every working week and at most weekends during the summer traffic is at a standstill or crawling along the Missing Link typically from 6am to 9 am and then the congestion frequently starts at 3pm in the afternoon and continues until well after 6pm.

In the Parish residents have carried out extensive traffic monitoring and speed surveys with an established group of volunteers. This shows that at peak times an average of 1000 cars per hour are using the village of Birdlip as a diversionary route. This traffic includes a high proportion of commercial as well as some heavy goods vehicles diverting along single track roads and, especially in the village of Cowley, roads that are extremely narrow and not designed for heavy traffic.

I also ask that you consider the impact on our parish primary school as these children are impacted not just from the pollution from the A417, which is only some 500 yards to the North, but also the daily rat running.

A number of the responses to the question EXQ1 1.11.26 provide evidence of the impact of traffic in the Parish in the event of an incident such as the fatal accident that occurred on Crickley Hill just before Christmas and even the impact of something less significant such as when a large articulated lorry shed its load when illegally traversing Birdlip Hill. Sir, when you review the video evidence may I direct you to the absurd video of a resident trying to deal with the traffic that was gridlocked trying to traverse the narrow lane past her property. You will witness her valiant efforts to help motorists who were unable to pass by opening the gates to her own driveway so that drivers could use it as

a passing place.

So finally I would like the Applicant to consider the following points which are associated with Transport:

1. In the Relevant Representation made by Cowley and Birdlip Parish Council I raised an unresolved issue with regard to speeding on the B4070 as it approaches the village of Birdlip from the current A417 at the Birdlip junction. There is a local speed watch group that carries out regular radar surveys with support from the local Police. Average speeds in the 30MPH residential area approaching Birdlip on the B4070 are 48 MPH when the village is not congested

Whilst I accept that the Applicant would perhaps not be expected to consider such an issue outside the boundary of the scheme but in this case we believe that whilst the proposed scheme will substantially reduce the rat-running problem, the issue of speeding on the B4070 will get worse as there is less congestion to slow down the local traffic

The solution I have asked the Applicant to consider is a minor extension of the red line boundary by approximately 300 yards along the B4070 to the current Birdlip Village sign. The Applicant should then be able to extend its proposed 30 MPH speed limit to the Birdlip sign to slow the traffic legally to a sensible speed before it reaches the residential area.

Furthermore we have asked the Applicant to consider the impact of the Air Balloon Way on pedestrians who will be accessing it from Birdlip village and the hotel. We welcome this new amenity which will be an asset to locals and visitors but the current footpaths are inadequate and involve a dangerous need to cross over the road at the edge of the village. Again having to dodge the speeding traffic.

We have asked the Applicant to, in conjunction with a small extension to the Red Line Boundary, improve the footpaths and provide a pedestrian crossing to further slow traffic and provide safe access to the Air Balloon Way.

As I said, this has already been raised with the Applicant and the response has been that there are ongoing discussions with Gloucestershire Highways to resolve in the detailed design stage. Sir, I would like to encourage the Applicant to further consider including these measures now to enshrine them in the DCO and protect lives and fully integrate this proposed scheme with the local community.

2. Secondly I refer you to the substantial stone built bus shelter on the current

A417 some 300 yards east of the Air Balloon Pub.

This stone bus shelter is owned and maintained by the Parish Council. There have been discussions so far with the Applicant and other interested parties as clearly this bus shelter will be redundant once the scheme is constructed. We understand that the Applicant is considering that this building will become a bat-cave for bats to roost.

I am sure the Parish Council will not have an objection to the future use of this building as a contribution to improved biodiversity, but I would like to ask the Applicant for clarity as to the plans for the future ownership of this asset. The Parish Council is not qualified to maintain a bat cave/roost so we would welcome the proposal for its future ownership but also ask whether the Applicant plans to compensate the Parish Council or maybe replace it with a new bus shelter in the Parish on an alternative bus route.

Thank you, that concludes my presentation.