

## Deadline 5 Submission

### The ExA's Site Inspections - US12 and US13

It was extremely disappointing to note that, despite travelling down Cold Slad Lane and visiting Birdip twice, the Panel Members did not, unless the Summaries are incomplete, travel down any of the routes in Cowley which have been highlighted as 3 major problems. i.e. Cowley Lane from the A417 through Stockwell Farm to the village centre, the only mention being that they noted the junction when exiting Cowley Wood Lane, the lane connecting the A436 from Ullenwood to the village centre (once known as Muddy Path) and the lane taking traffic on to the bottom of Elkstone Hill, at the Green Dragon Pub, passing the Girl Guide Centre and Cricket Pitch. Our survey, submitted at Deadline 4, showed the volume of traffic these single track lanes carry and stated their appalling state of repair and I would respectfully ask Members to make a return visit to assess the situation for themselves and also to drive up Elkstone Hill to its junction with the A417 where traffic cuts through to.

Whilst the Ex A accept that there is "a unique micro climate" in the area I wonder if they have a full realisation of the situation or are merely being guided by National Highways in the matter

The specific climatic conditions have been further reinforced by storm Eunice which resulted in closure of the A417 from the Air Balloon to the A429 junction at Cirencester because of high winds, as reported on BBC Breakfast on February 18th and confirmed on Gloucestershire Highway's website, and these extremes of weather are set to increase with climate change. This makes a further nonsense of Mr. Goddard's statement that he "did not envisage the road ever having to be closed". He might say that this could not have been predicted but that is the problem with climate change, the unpredictable happens all the time, the world over. Topographically the proposed Shab Hill Junction is higher than the existing Air Balloon roundabout, and much more exposed to adverse weather conditions, making an approach at 70mph even more dangerous. Surely it is time to put public safety ahead of the desire for a motorway style road in this highly sensitive area.

ISH4 " AP13 asks the Applicant to investigate the 60mph limit now imposed by National Highways on 4 major roads in England. Mr. Ivan le Fevre, its Head of Environment, has said "60mph is about the sweet spot for keeping the air relatively clean without clogging the road" and, as we move more and more towards emission control, this is likely to be the norm in other areas

Is it reasonable therefore for the South West Area to go completely against its own organisation's recommendations when, in Option 12, they have a 50mph stretch and could, very sensibly in that location, reduce to 60mph from the bottom of Crickley Hill to the Cowley roundabout. Wales already has a 50mph limit on several roads to reduce NO2 and will produce a supplemental plan this year.

Option 30 is an outdated scheme for a previous time and an old way of thinking. Since the first Public Consultation in 2017 the world has changed and so has public opinion. The pandemic caused the general public to look more closely at our countryside and wildlife, as lockdowns took them out to enjoy what is on offer the desire to protect it increased. It also became apparent that the enormous reduction in traffic was helping to reverse climate change more quickly than could have been anticipated. The expected "new normal" would see more hybrid and flexible working, with less use of cars for commuting and less need for new, fast roads.

Since the end of World War 2 more than 50% of our hedgerows have been lost, mainly to increase the land available for food production but Stockwell Farm has managed to combine the nurturing of these vital ecological places whilst maintaining maximum productivity. Crops do not

grow unless pollinated by the insects which inhabit these areas.

The war in Ukraine will affect us all for decades to come, with prices increasing across the board. The lack of wheat and other grains we import from there, and almost certainly Russia, will increase the need for us to produce more of our own food and Stockwell Farm, which already has several hundred acres dedicated to growing crops, could easily change grazing land to more crop production but not if the fields are to be severed by the A417. The resultant small fields would not only be uneconomical but make it impossible for the huge present day machinery to operate. An added benefit to being less reliant on imports is, of course, the reduction in emissions, so vital to the reverse of climate change.

The outbreak of war in Ukraine means that a "new normal" will be different again from post-pandemic. Whatever the outcome our cost of living will rise exponentially and fuel is already bearing the greatest burden, meaning many people, and organisations, will need to greatly reduce the use of their vehicles. The strain on the public purse will be immense as the Government will not only have to find a way of supporting our own people through the rise in the cost of living, but also contribute to the vast humanitarian crisis which is unfolding before our eyes and, eventually, help to rebuild Ukraine.

We do not need and cannot afford this out of date road scheme, which will probably be redundant before it has even been started. It should be abandoned now, before any more public money is wasted, and reviewed again when the world has settled and we know what our new requirements are and how we can best achieve them, whilst preserving the environment and advancing the reverse of climate change.

I understand there is irrefutable evidence that the re-purposing of the section of A417 between Stockwell Lane and the Birdlip Junction had been agreed by NH, not only long before the announcement of Option 30, but even before the Public Consultations held in 2019 and 2020, proof that Option 30 was, as suspected, the only Option they were considering and a forgone conclusion. The Public Consultations held in 2019 and 2020 would therefore appear to have been not only a mere PR exercise and smokescreen to cover the fact that neither Option 12, nor indeed any other Options, were ever under serious consideration but also an appalling and quite inexcusable waste of tax payers money. This cannot be considered acceptable.