

Question: Put simply, can the ExA be appraised **again** as to why Option 12 had a junction at Cowley Roundabout in the design put forward for the Public Consultation, whilst it was assessed that Option 30 did not require it. The Applicant's response to the previous question has not provided a credible response as it relates to after the Public Consultation – Section 6.7 of the SAR (Document Reference 7.4, APP-420). The ExA must now seriously question whether at the time of Public Consultation, Highways descope the design for Option 30 to keep the cost of the Option within the estimated cost range of 250 - 500 million. Highways have been given the opportunity to explain why, but they have clearly contradicted themselves in their latest response - *level differences and geology* clearly were not the reasons.

Question: Can the ExA be appraised as to whether at the time of the consultation, if the junction layouts had been of similar number and design, would the monetised costs and benefits of both options have been more similar or even in favour of Option 12?

Issue 2 – I do not believe that Highways have responded to this issue

The Technical Appraisal Report states on page 54 that the Crickley Hill Country Park is located adjacent to Option 12 and within 1km of Option 30³. Crickley Hill Country Park runs parallel with the A417 as the road runs up to the Air Balloon roundabout, de facto, adjacent to both Option 12 and Option 30.

Question: Can the ExA be appraised by Highways as to where Option 30 is assessed not to be adjacent to the Crickley Hill Country Park, as we believe both Options are adjacent.

Question: Considering this, can the ExA be assured that many of the environmental impacts for Option 30 have not been understated when compared with Option 12, which in turn could have had a biased impact on the Public Consultations and the views of the public?

Issue 3 – the Microclimate

Highways stated in their written response⁴ that the scheme traffic model is representative of an annual average weekday within the year as required to support the design, environmental assessment and the business case for the scheme. The scheme benefits are therefore representative of the average conditions, and this is the basis of the design and business case.

Highways England made a comment about the “volatile microclimate” that exists where the scheme will be built.

Highways acknowledge that a “volatile microclimate” exists on the proposed route, however for the design their model is representative of an annual average weekday within the year. One would assume that for safety reasons, knowing issues with the weather, detailed modelling and assessments would have been undertaken.

Question: Can the ExA be assured that Highways have adequately considered the “volatile microclimate” that is relatively common during the winter, and that they are satisfied that speed restrictions will not be introduced which will erode the perceived benefit of Option 30?

Issue 4 – Traffic data regarding the operation of Barnwood and Longlevens junctions

Highways provided traffic data⁵ and as predicted there is an increase in traffic of up to 8%. This is on top of what are already extremely busy road junctions at peak times where there are already large delays.

³ TR010056-000602-7.9 Technical Appraisal Report (February 2018), Page 54, Para 3.14.20

⁴ 8.26 Comments on Responses received by Deadline 4, Para 2.12, Table 2-3, dated March 2022

⁵ 8.26 Comments on Responses received by Deadline 4, Para 2.12, Table 2-1 and 2-2, dated March 2022

Highways model would suggest an increase in journey time from 30 seconds in the 2041 DM to 36 seconds in the 2041 DS scenario for the AM average hour. This represents a 20% increase in journey time caused by Option 30.

Question: Can the ExA be assured that the increase in journey time shown for the Barnwood and Longlevens junctions will not erode all the perceived benefits on the assumed economic and environmental benefits of Option 30. Are the ExA satisfied that Option 30 is not just passing the traffic management problems further down the A417 to the next major road junction?